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The impact of Self-Generated Images in online pornography

**A thesis submitted to Middlesex University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Andrew Monaghan: BA (Hons), PGCE, PG Cert., MA

School of Law

Middlesex University

April 2017

4/IV/2017

PhD Thesis



**Middlesex
University
London**

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The impact of Self-Generated Images in online pornography

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Submitted for the Degree of PhD by Research Thesis

The work described in this thesis was carried out by the author, a student of the School of Law at Middlesex University. This work has not been submitted for any other degree and is the original work of the author, except where acknowledged by reference.

Andrew Monaghan – 4/IV/2017

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"Chi cerca mal, mal trova"

Please note for your clarity: all quotes from secondary sources or book titles, etc. in this work are given within 'single' inverted commas; all direct quotes from the research participants of this investigation's primary interviews are given in "double" inverted commas.

Abstract

This investigation seeks to evaluate the impact on individuals, and society, of Self-Generated Images (SGI's) in online pornography. It presents an inquiry into the extent, and modes, of SGI use among a large sample of adult internet users. This forms the initial platform for a theoretical analysis of the rapidly emerging topic, alongside an empirical investigation into how SGI's are used, and criminally abused. A mixed research method strategy was consequently adopted, employing a quantitative anonymous online survey (Stage 1), qualitative face-to-face interviews with serving Metropolitan Police Service officers in the SOECA unit (Stage 2), and qualitative Skype interviews with active SGI users (Stage 3).

The thesis is divided into three main sections.

Firstly, in chapters one-to-four, the context for this study into SGI's is explained, including the specific UK statute laws regarding licit and illicit pornographic images. Commonly used pornographic terminologies are defined. Furthermore, existent research on the topic of SGI's/online pornography is scrutinized, and several theoretical issues are given a discourse in relation to SGI's. An analysis of the free speech/online pornography debate is included, together with an examination of the criminal abuse of SGI's.

The second part, chapter five, provides a rationale for the adoption of a mixed research methods strategy in pursuing the aims of this study. Many methodological issues regarding the three stages of the primary fieldwork are addressed; these include: ontology, epistemology, research paradigms and axiology, ethical underpinnings, practical considerations, and the strengths and limitations of methods chosen.

In the third section, chapters six-to-eight, the study's key findings include a taxonomy of the six main types of SGI.

Passive SGI viewing is very pervasive, particularly among the key demographic groups of younger adults, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) and males, and may be becoming the norm. Free PornTube websites are predominately used; but also, increasingly, social network sites (SNS's) and messaging/image sharing apps.

Most adults use SGI's safely for sexual stimulation; however, some use them for educational and humorous purposes.

For a minority of active creators of SGI's, disastrous personal consequences can result because of subsequent criminal abuse, including cyber-bullying/trolling, sextortion, etc.

Gay and bisexual men have highly accelerated rates of SGI use on hooking-up sites, often leading to hazardous risk taking.

Children face grave dangers from making and sharing sexualised SGI's as online child sexual abuse (CSA), grooming and sextortion, etc. may transpire.

In the UK's schools, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), are in a parlous state regarding the issues and dangers of SGI's.

Finally, this inquiry provides some original insights into the areas of applying and generating theories, using mixed research methods, and the empirical findings uncovered.

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Abbreviations

ACPO - Association of Chief Police Officers

AMU - Active Monthly Users (of SNS's)

BDSM - Bondage Discipline Sado-Masochism (fetish sex)

CAID - Child Abuse Image Database

CC - Credit Card

CEOP - Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

CPS - Crown Prosecution Service

CSA - Child Sexual Abuse

DRIPA 2014 - Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Act

ESRC - Economic & Social Research Council

ECJ - European Court of Justice

EU - European Union

GAFA - Google, Amazon, Facebook & Apple

GCHQ - Government Communications Head Quarters (Cheltenham, UK)

GHB a.k.a. 'liquid ecstasy' - Gamma Hydroxybutyrate. Recreational sex drug

IIOC's - Indecent Images of Children

IPA 2016 - Investigatory Powers Act (replaced the RIPA 2000 & DRIPA 2014)

ISP - Internet Service Provider (e.g. BT, Sky or Virgin etc.)

LA - US California city

LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

MPS - Metropolitan Police Service

NCA - National Crime Agency

NSA - No Strings Attached (sex)

NSM - New Social Movements (new 'identity' protest groups of this theory)

NSPCC - National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

OCC - Office of the Children's Commissioner

OS - Operating System (for smartphones, PC's, laptops & notebook computers)

P2P - Peer to Peer (one-to-one trading online, of images etc.)

PIS - Participant Information Sheet

PSHE - Personal, Social and Health Education

PPV - Pay Per View (TV)

RIPA 2000 - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

SEW - Sexually Explicit Websites

SGliOP - Self-Generated Images in Online Pornography

SGI's - Self-Generated Images (pornographic and erotic)

SNS - Social Networking Sites

SOECA - Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse (MPS specialist unit)

SRE - Sex and Relationships Education

STI's - Sexually Transmitted Infections

TOR - The Onion Router (encrypted Dark Web internet browser)

VR - Virtual Reality

WWW - World Wide Web

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background to this SGI investigation

This inquiry into SGI's comes at a time of numerous rapid changes in this field. These changes have enabled the development of amateur-produced, online pornographic images. The main relevant changes facilitating the rise of SGI's are:

- **Hardware advances.** There has been near universal market penetration of affordable, online connected smartphones, with their high-definition digital cameras to record both still and video images; hence, 80% of 12-15yo's in the UK now have a smartphone (ofcom, 2016). Also of significance is the mobility of portable Wi-Fi enabled devices, such as tablet computers and laptops, together with inbuilt cameras. The speed of Wi-Fi and broadband connections has accelerated, as has the memory storage capacity of these mobile devices, all facilitating faster upload/download, and streaming speeds, alongside the ability to store large video files in greater gigabyte size. Recent research has revealed that children now spend more time online in a week than watching TV (Ibid).
- **Software advances.** A range of apps have come into being in the last decade that have helped to propel the growth of pornography produced by online users, by offering an alternative to the product provided by the commercial adult-entertainment industry for more passive purchase and consumption. Such apps include SNS's (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.), messaging apps (i.e. WhatsApp, etc.), and image apps (i.e. Instagram, Tumblr and Snapchat, etc.). The PornTube websites have also become pre-eminent, overtaking many commercial alternatives, with their offerings of free-porn. These websites also allow SGI's to be uploaded and viewed, either for purchase, or for free.

- Affordability of devices, and Internet Service Provider (ISP) connectivity. As the price of smartphones, laptops, tablets, and data connectivity to the internet falls, the ability to manufacture and promulgate amateur pornography has been increasingly transferred into the demotic hands of online users.
- From a cultural studies perspective, an increasingly sexualised content in the mainstream media of nudity, sex, swearing, and violence, may be making pornography more acceptable. Writers talk about the spread of the 'Pornosphere', the rise of 'Pornogrification', or the growth of 'Porno Chic' (Paasonen, et al., 2007; McNair, 2013), and this may be creating a cultural acceptance of sex and nudity, in which SGI's have burgeoned. For SGI's, this has happened simultaneously with the rise of selfie taking and sharing online, to the extent that we may now be a Selfie-Nation, parading selfie sticks.
- The criminal abuse of SGI's has rocketed. Twenty years ago, only a few hundred people in the UK were arrested for possession of indecent images of children (IIOC's), usually sexually suggestive polaroid snaps, passed hand-to-hand, by furtive paedophile offenders. The Home Office has estimated that there were only 7,000 hard copy IIOC's in circulation in 1990, while by 2009, some 2.5 million separate CSA images were seized from offenders (CEOP, 2012). Now, the police have a database of 50,000 suspects who upload, download, or create IIOC's, but are largely non-contact offenders (Ramesh, 2014). Sexual offences are increasing fast in an era when the overall crime rate is falling. Thus, in the year 2013-14, sexual offences in England and Wales grew by 17%, while the overall crime rate fell by 15% (Travis, 2014). SGI creators find themselves increasingly caught up in the criminally abusive behaviour perpetrated by online offenders. Children can become involved in exchanging SGI/IIOC's, with internet contacts on SNS's/message apps, or message boards, who turn out to be predatory abusers, hoping to trick, or blackmail, their victims into producing more images. Alternatively, children can become entangled in exchanging

self-taken IloC's, as part of online child grooming manoeuvres lawbreakers perpetrate. Adults, also, can face many similar threats to their online health, safety, security and digital privacy, because of their SGI creations, in the forms of: revenge porn, cyber-bullying/trolling, sextortion, blackmail, cyber-stalking and online romance fraud, etc. In 2015, cyber-crime made up 53% of all recorded crimes in England and Wales with 2.46 million incidents, and 2.11 million victims, although the majority were cases of cyber enabled fraud (NCA, 2016). Much of this explosion of cyber-crime has been due to the unbreakable encryption afforded by 'The Onion Router' (TOR) browser, which affords complete anonymity to those tech savvy online offenders who know how to use it. Fortunately for law enforcement, such offenders are not the majority.

Structure of this thesis

Before proceeding further, this section gives an overview of the way this work is laid out. As a multi-disciplinary inquiry into SGI's, it encompasses elements of: criminology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies, psychology, history and economics.

The thesis is divided into three main sections. In the first segment, which comprises chapters two-to-four, an analysis of existing research into SGI's is conducted; relatively little research exists at present, and this provides one of the major rationales for investigating. New knowledge about SGI's has been uncovered as this subject has not yet been studied in any depth. Many technological advances have driven the growth of SGI's in the last decade: devices with greater memory storage capacity; built in high definition cameras for still or moving image capture; falling prices of devices; increased broadband width; and the explosion of high speed Wi-Fi in homes, public spaces and the work environment. These multiple hardware and software innovations have given the power to create amateur pornographic images a protean nature for

online users, including some children. SGI's, along with many other online developments, such as SNS's, or the 'Gig' economy, are just some of the consequences of the many advances. The very newness of SGI's has left them academically under-researched, and subject to anecdotal judgements which lack empirical substantiation.

The first part of this thesis also examines the theoretical background to the rise of SGI's. Much of this is inevitably the application of theories to the subject, some of which originated over a century ago, such as Marxism. SGI's are analysed and evaluated through the perspectives of these theories, many having been transposed by the author to address the nature of amateur online pornography. Some have been found deficient and dismissed, while others are highly relevant to the topic. Cultural studies theorists may have provided the best contemporary and consequential analysis of online pornography/SGI's in modern western society.

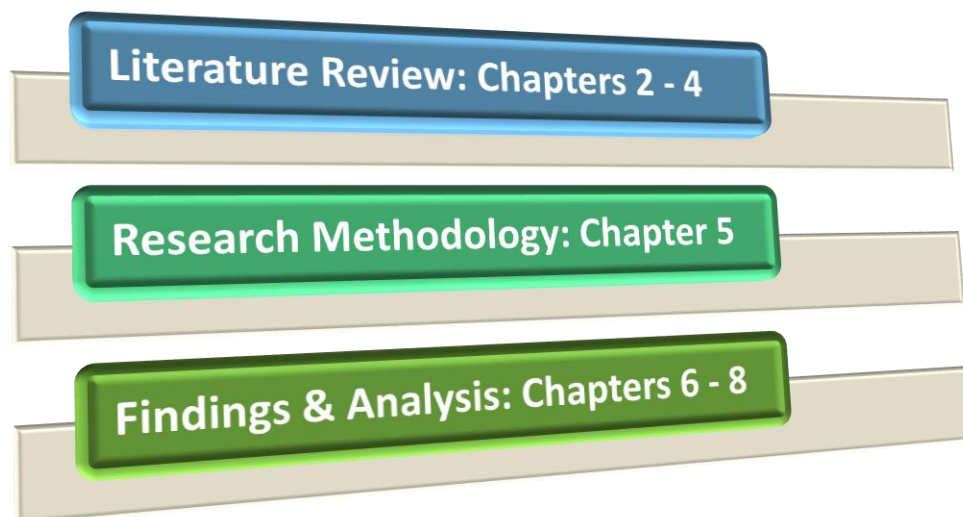


Figure 1 Structure of this thesis

The second section of this study concerns the mixed research methods strategy, adopted to conduct the primary fieldwork into SGI's; this is presented in chapter five, the longest of the nine chapters in this submission. A plethora of both theoretical and practical issues surrounding the rationale for the employment of a three-stage fieldwork methodology, are discussed. This mixed research methodology comprised:

- Stage 1: an online anonymous quantitative survey, with N603 useable responses.
- Stage 2: five, face-to-face interviews, with serving Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), 'Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse' (SOECA) officers.
- Stage 3: five Skype interviews, with active SGI users, volunteers from Stage 1.

From a theoretical perspective, tenets of ontology, epistemology, paradigms and axiology are all applied to the three-stage mixed research methods strategy, chosen for this SGI inquiry.

The process of achieving ethical approval for the primary fieldwork is examined, in an endeavour to demonstrate how various techniques were deployed to ensure the most rigorous and robust ethical standards were adhered to. All the relevant documentation relating to this can be reviewed in Appendix 1.

Practical considerations regarding the implementation of the mixed methods approach are examined, such as: time, money, anonymity, and the health and safety of both participants and researcher.

Chapter five also analyses the respective strengths and weaknesses of the three fieldwork methods used. Justifications are made for why some approaches were accepted, while others were rejected as unsuitable. The methods used are critiqued, recognising that they do have limitations, which could impact on the overall data quality of the primary findings.

At its conclusion, the research methodology chapter gives an overview of the samples in all three fieldwork stages, including how participants were contacted, and how representative they may be of any wider population.

The third and final section of this thesis presents the data findings of the investigation's fieldwork. This is split into three separate chapters, six-to-eight. These data are analysed, and evaluated thematically by the findings uncovered, rather than ordered chronologically. Chapters six-to-eight are highly integrated by themes, incorporating data findings from all three fieldwork stages, with analysis and evaluation of their significance following on directly from the results.

Defining pornographic terms & UK statute law

This section sets down the exact meanings of many of the terms relating to pornography used by the researcher, and states their legal context in terms of UK statute law.

Pornographic images are those which are designed to instil sexual arousal in the viewer (CPS, n.d.). This is radically different from erotica, which is designed to stimulate the viewer through a greater aesthetic and artistic content, rather than an appeal to basic carnal lust (Seltzer, 2011). It should be noted however that such goals can provoke sexual desires in those who gaze at erotic material, and so there exists a considerable grey area between erotica and pornography.

Extreme Pornography was made a criminal offence in the UK, via section five of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. Such images include: those in which a person's life is threatened; those where a person's anus, breasts or genitalia are likely to suffer serious injury; and, instances of necrophilia or bestiality (CPS, n.d.).

In the UK, the term 'Child Pornography' has been displaced by the legal term, Indecent Images of Children (IloC). This is to distinguish between the legitimate use of pornography and erotica by adults, and the criminal offence of possessing, viewing, making, or distributing IloC's. The legal classification of 'child' was raised to under eighteen, from under sixteen, in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Sytech, n.d.). Three main laws in the UK criminalise images of sexual activity with under 18's: The Protection of Children Act 1978, The Criminal Justice Act 1988, and the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (Harris, 2013). The maximum sentence for breaking each of these laws is five, ten and three years' imprisonment, respectively.

Every suspicious image must be scrutinised individually and categorised on a one to five scale, rising in seriousness. The lowest level (one), involves erotic posing with no sexual activity, ascending to the acme of criminal sexual behaviour (five), involving bestiality and sadism (CPS, n.d.).

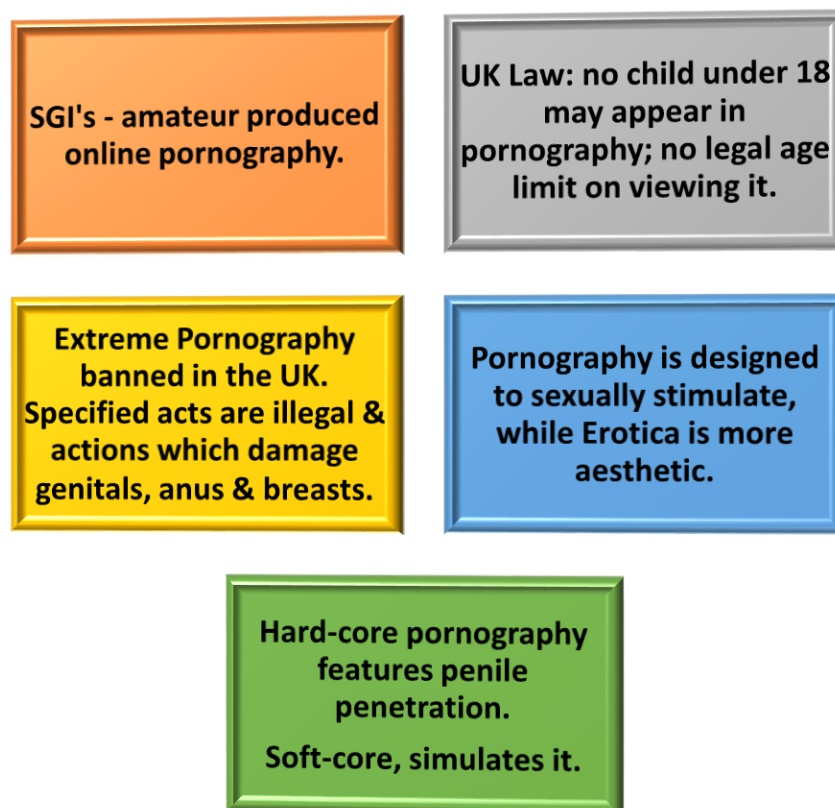


Figure 2 Meanings of terms used in this study

Legal definitions of Extreme Pornography and IIOC's furnished the investigator with unequivocal cast-iron definitions for these categories. The same, however, cannot be said of other sub-types within the pornography milieu. The two major classifications are 'soft-core' and 'hard-core' pornography; soft-core contains nudity, but no actual penile penetration, although this may be realistically simulated. In hard-core, such penetration does indeed take place, making the viewed product more 'realistic' in nature, in that it depicts actual copulation, rather than counterfeiting (Paasonen, 2011).

Pornographic material of any kind created by amateurs, on home and personal devices, such as digital camcorders, mobile/smartphones, PC's, laptops and tablets, comprised the subject investigated as SGI's, in this thesis. Furthermore, such SGI's needed to be uploaded/sent, in some format, online.

The abbreviation SGI's is an umbrella term used to encompass a catholic range of all the many faces of pornography, if they were amateur-produced; it extends from sexts, through the categories of soft-core and hard-core, still, or video, and finally, on occasion, encompassing offenders' abusive/criminal activities with SGI's.

Two other parallel, contemporary attempts, have been made to assign SGI's an appropriate nomenclature, these are, 'Youth Generated Sexual Imagery' and 'Youth Produced Sexual Content' (Wolak & Finkelhor, 2011; Internet Watch Foundation, 2015). The term, SGI's, employed in this work, encompasses both these additional taxonomies within its parameters.

The research objectives of this thesis

Before commencing an examination of the existing research, literature and theories apropos SGI's, it is opportune to clearly state the main research objectives of the investigation:

- To discover the extent of use of SGI's by a large sample of online pornography users.
- To uncover potential differential rates of engagement with SGI's among different social/demographic groups, and the possible causes and implications of any discoveries.
- To examine how SGI users, utilize their images, their motivations and the online platforms employed to engage with them; in addition, how they feel about these various issues.
- To establish how many, and in what proportions, active SGI users merely consume amateur produced pornography made by others; conversely, how many are creating, and publishing/sending online, sexual images of themselves.
- To investigate the question of whether the use of SGI's is having a beneficial, harmful, or neutral impact on both users, and society.
- To uncover the extent, and ways, in which SGI's are abused and exploited by online criminals to commit illegal acts on children and adults. Furthermore, to examine possible approaches which could ameliorate these problems, including greater censorship and blocking of online pornography.
- To apply contemporary and, potentially, historically apt theories, to the use of SGI's; to discover how applicable these approaches are, and to seek for new theories, based on the data findings of the three stages of primary fieldwork that were conducted.

- To allow SGI users, and specialist law enforcement officers working in apprehending online CSA/IloC's offenders, to express their attitudes to, and experiences of, amateur pornography.
- To investigate whether SGI's can have a pedagogical function for adolescents, and adults, in raising sexual literacy levels; also, whether greater awareness of online digital privacy, health, safety and security issues may be promoted about their use.

Chapter 2

SGI's: Censorship Vs Free Speech, & Pedagogy

Introduction

The aims of this chapter are twofold:

Firstly, it sets out the position of SGI's/online pornography within a vigorous and highly conflicted debate surrounding free speech. This debate has raged on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and has particularistic issues for both the USA and the UK. However, the core argument is essentially the same: should citizens have the right to produce, distribute and view amateur pornographic images as part of their rights to liberty and free speech, or not? Supporters of liberty for citizens believe the former, while opponents of online pornography believe the images are not speech, and therefore access to them should not be enshrined within any constitutional guarantees of individual rights. This chapter examines SGI's within this debate, where sexual and artistic freedoms and rights are pitted against moral objections to the self-created sexual materials.

Secondly, the chapter examines the case for the possibility of an educational role being performed by SGI's. Although SGI's are almost exclusively created for sexual stimulation, and not their pedagogical functionality, nevertheless, some users may attain increased sexual knowledge from viewing them. Furthermore, the role of online pornography/SGI's within the school curriculum will be discussed. It is possible that sexual literacy may be raised by discussion of issues surrounding them, in PSHE/SRE classes. The potential dangers of criminal exploitation in creating SGI's could be raised and addressed, thus enhancing children's personal digital privacy, and online health, safety and security.

Censorship, Free Speech & SGI's

This section aims to consider SGI's within an ongoing debate about the nature of free speech in the UK/US. The rise of online mobile connectivity has led to the democratisation of pornography production, putting its manufacture, promulgation and use increasingly into the hands of ordinary people. In the past, the state had attempted to control the publication and circulation of pornography; however, the SGI genie is firmly out of the bottle now, although the current UK Conservative government may attempt to put it back in.

2001: State surveillance & online pornography/SGI's

The events of the year 2001, in which al-Qaeda hijacked four domestic US planes, attacking the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, proved seminal for online pornography. In that year, the esoteric debate about censorship versus free speech was dragged into the conflict between state surveillance of citizens and their personal privacy. A decade and a half later, the large internet corporations, such as Apple and Google, are battling to resist the demands of the Federal US government to access the private data, including SGI's, of their customers; this volte-face occurring after the 2013 revelations of Edward Snowden, National Security Agency whistle-blower, regarding the shocking extent of the US's surveillance of its people's allegedly secure and private data in the interests of national security, with, at that time, the complete connivance of the internet corporations (Greenwald, et al., 2013). Nor is state surveillance primarily a US issue; the role of the UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), has also fallen under the spotlight for related reasons, namely what MI5/MI6 knew about CIA Extraordinary Rendition flights via UK airbases and enhanced interrogation techniques, including waterboarding (Norton-Taylor & Rushe, 2013). The internet corporations are now in the courts resisting requests by the National Security Agency for citizens' private data (Rushe, 2014). Furthermore, they have developed sophisticated programs for cryptography which effectively make it

impossible for government surveillance to ever break this protection and spy on their customers' communications. The implications of this for SGI's are obvious: those who make, distribute, publish, and view such material online, now have carte blanche to do so. Furthermore, for those who use the internet for the purposes of criminal offending in creating and sharing IloC's, there now exists a further shield of opacity behind which to safely pursue their activities, through the employment of the TOR browser, which guarantees anonymity and confidentiality for users, in addition to the Dark Web (Ball, 2014).

Recent software and hardware developments have led to internet users being able to save their data to the Cloud from all their accessed devices. This represents almost unlimited data storage capacity on server-farms for individuals. Users access their data via their own password protected accounts. The advantages are enormous, with massive storage capacity being accessible, from multiple online mobile devices, and the potential danger of losing all an individual's data due to the failure of one device, being eliminated. The problem for all Cloud users, but particularly for SGI users, is that an individual's password can be hacked, and a third party could gain access to highly personal data, potentially including SGI's, that they may have taken of themselves, and uploaded for storage. The 'Celebgate' leak illustrates this danger, with the publication in August 2014, of over four-hundred compromising SGI images, of one-hundred celebrities, on the 4chan website (Arthur, 2014). The gravity of the harm is exacerbated by the fact that many devices, including newer iPhones, now back-up all data automatically to the Cloud as a default setting, without the account holder even being aware of it. Any SGI material that users make on those devices, is automatically stored in their iCloud account. When such an account is hacked, say via a 'bot attack', where automated computers keep trying to access an account with a password cracker using multiple log-in attempts, the individual's data/images can be stolen. This is exactly what occurred in the Celebgate leak (Naughton, 2014). Some of those leaked SGI's were produced by victims when under the age of eighteen,

meaning that hundreds of thousands of visitors to the 4chan website were technically guilty of viewing IloC's, self-taken by the victims as SGI's (Arthur, 2014).

Contemporaneous to these events since 2001, technological changes in communications hardware and software were leading to the genesis of SGI's: broadband, Wi-Fi, digital camcorders and cameras, computers with ever larger memory capacity, and mobile/smartphones with video recording capabilities. Smartphone penetration of the UK now stands at 76.6% (estimated for 2016) of mobile users, rising from 1.6% in 2004; while tablet computers were estimated to be used by 50% of the population, at the end of 2015 (Arthur, 2014; Dredge, 2015; Statista, 2016). Although pornography has existed throughout history, from sexual graffiti etched on the walls of Pompeii, to amateur photography, Super 8mm films in the 1970's, and video tape camcorders, it is the rise of digital technology, meshing with the technological advances in computers and the internet, which ushered to life the recently inchoate phenomenon of SGI's (Tang, 1999). In the last decade, the whole SGI genre has undergone a startlingly accelerated development, and it displays no signs of slowing down. The democratisation of pornography has arrived, with the greatest engine of its growth being the explosive increase in still and moving SGI's images; the rise of the protean sexualized selfie mirrors this process. This phenomenon is the culmination of a process which has given online pornography the sobriquet of being an '*erotic engine*', or '*the handmaiden of new technology*' (Maddison, 2010; Barrs, 2011). This demotic upsurge has been denominated as the rise of 'Citizen Porn' by Brian McNair (2013). He claims it is a great benefit for the countries where it predominates, because the open, liberal societies that have allowed pornography to proliferate, are the very same ones where women's rights and gay equality have advanced the most. In contrast, those theocratic and authoritarian/repressive countries that ban pornography, are commensurately the most regressive on such human rights issues. McNair (Ibid) provocatively suggests that such undemocratic regimes should be air-dropped with pornography, to improve life for their subjugated citizens.

SGI's: Are they 'free-speech'?

The debate about censorship and free speech over online pornography had been a particularistic one to the US, where the First Amendment to the US constitution states:

'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...' (Cornell University Law School, n.d.).

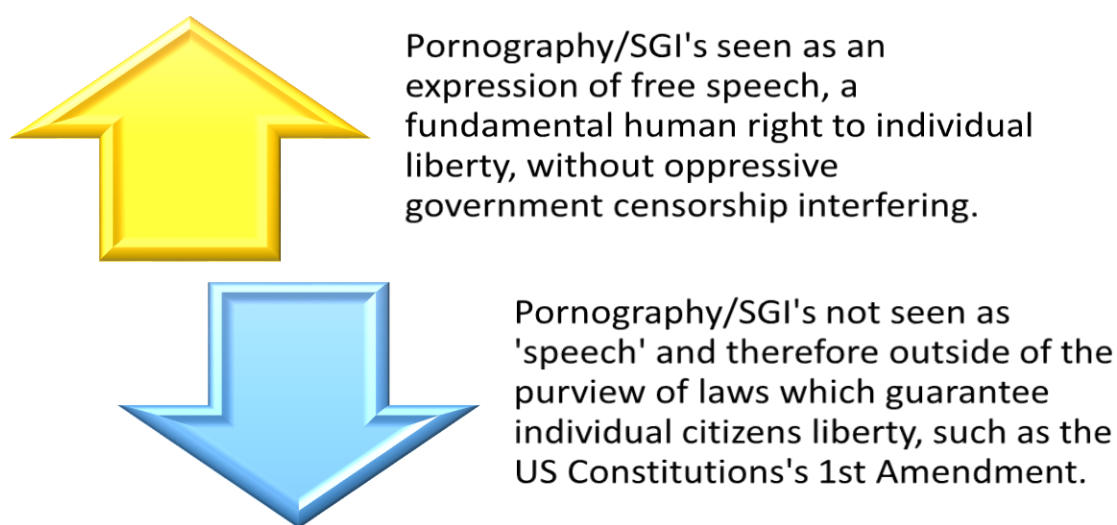


Figure 3 SGI's & the free speech Vs censorship debate

A discussion of the semantics of these words throws up the fundamental clash which continues to rage in the US, and now encompasses SGI's; namely, the freedom of the individual to publish or view what they want, without state interference. Although the First Amendment was originally intended to promote freedom of religion, ideas, and political thought, it has now, for many, expanded to include the artistic, cultural, mass media and pornographic/SGI's spheres also.

If pornography is an expression of free speech, as libertarians in the US assert, it must consequently be protected from those who would use the powers of the state to limit its use, or ban it all together; when a state begins to criminalise certain expressions of

free speech, the slippery slope to tyranny is embarked upon (Kennedy, 2007). Conversely, opponents of this stance believe that pornography should not be classed as free speech; they include fundamentalist Christians, convinced that online pornography/SGI's leads to criminal offending with IloC's, family breakdown, immorality, homosexuality and sexual addiction, etc. (York & LaRue, 2007). The rise of the internet/SGI's, has flung accelerant onto a political conflagration over free speech in the US, which preceded their existence.

The religious hostility from Christian fundamentalists in the US towards online pornography/SGI's is especially bellicose, as they think the dissemination of such images among the wider population is facilitated. They believe that previously soft-core pornography had to be purchased from a newsagent's 'top-shelf', and hard-core from a sex shop, thus exposing the buyer to potential embarrassment and public identification. Now, online pornography/SGI's have eradicated this deterrence, allowing temptation to flourish within the privacy of the home, or in a download on a smartphone. This phenomenon of ease of access to pornography, has been entitled the 4A's process: availability, access, anonymity & affordability (Davidson & Gottschalk, 2010). Polemical Christian fundamentalists' tracts have intoned about the moral degeneracy that results from the ubiquity of online pornography and what that means for society and the individual. Thus:

'Pornography is one of the most powerful weapons that Satan has ever used to enslave Christians, to neutralise or limit their walk with God. Porn limits and demeans their roles as husbands, wives, fathers and mothers as well as leaders in the church. Involvement in pornography can also lead to an addiction as real and powerful as that experienced by any drug addict or alcoholic' (Bowring, 2005, p. 65).

The role of pornography/SGI's, in allegedly undermining traditional nuclear family life and roles is evident, all threatening their utopian family views with: extra-marital sex, divorce, homosexuality, HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STI's) and abortion etc. Such sentiments are more pervasive and virulent in the US, where regular (i.e.

weekly) church attendance has been recently recorded to be at 40% of the population (Barnes & Lowry, n.d.). This is in stark contrast to the UK, where it is estimated to be only 9%, and a recent YouGov poll recorded that a monumental 79% of the population did not regard themselves as religious (British Human Association, 2014). The higher degree of secularisation evident in the UK, predominantly explains why the free speech Vs censorship/religion debate, is much more dynamic in the US.

The censorship issue has however recently erupted within Britain, which enshrined the right to free expression in law, through Article Ten of the Human Rights Act 1998 (legislation.gov.uk, n.d.). In 2014, the government announced that UK made internet only pornography movies, were now to be subjected to the same film censorship regulations as those made for sale by DVD in shops, under an amendment to the 2003 Communications Act (the Audio-visual Media Services Regulation 2014). This imposed an R18 classification on all such films, with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) justifying its move as helping to protect minors from harm. Pro-pornography, and free speech campaigners, immediately launched a vigorous media campaign against the measures, stating it was *'arbitrary censorship'* (Quinn, 2014). A long list of sexual acts that have been banned from online adult-entertainment movies made and downloaded in the UK, includes: spanking, caning, aggressive whipping, penetration by any object associated with violence, physical or verbal abuse (consensual or otherwise), urolagnia (water sports), role-playing as non-adults, physical restraint, humiliation, female ejaculation, strangulation, face-sitting, and fisting (Hooton, 2012). Rather ludicrously, the ban does not apply to any pornographic, online only films made outside of the UK, so rendering the whole strategy completely ineffectual, as viewers of such acts can merely choose to download and watch foreign made movies instead.

It may appear to some that free speech, on both sides of the Atlantic, is a nebulous abstruse concept, which concerns only politicians, media commentators, and academics. However, online pornography/SFI creators find themselves drawn into

this controversy by the ramping-up of state surveillance since September 11th, 2001. Historically, there has been a long record of clashes between pornography, wrapped in the banner of free expression, and censorship in the US; examine the case of Larry Flynt (1997), and the legal battles the publisher of Hustler magazine conducted in the 1970's-1980's, against obscenity charges and censorship attempts. Following 9/11, the triple issues of anti-terrorist driven state surveillance measures, online pornography and free speech have been inextricably entwined. In the US, the PATRIOT Act¹ of 2001, passed in the immediate wake of the al-Qaeda attacks, is the source of much of the agglomeration of surveillance powers by the federal state. Ostensibly, this was aimed at counter-terrorism, but has now encompassed unprecedented domestic spying on an increasingly broad range of the banal activities of ordinary citizens (ACLU, 2011). In the UK, analogue processes were at work with the passing of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) in 2000, and Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Act (DRIPA) in 2014 (Liberty, 2014; Kiss, 2014). These two laws have enlarged the UK state's ability to eavesdrop on people through intercepting telephone calls, reading emails and conducting covert surveillance. Most of this state espionage entails the monitoring of digital communications, which is why online pornography/SGI's find themselves enmeshed within the government's monitoring actions, under the pretext of scrutinizing gestating terror plots. The cherished rights of privacy and free expression find themselves overpowered by a more invasive, intrusive and 'Big Brother' style surveillance state. The threat to privacy and free expression in the UK, including SGI's/online pornography, is very real, as the RIPA allows hundreds of state organizations to conduct both digital monitoring and physical surveillance. It has led to local councils abusing RIPA's anti-terror surveillance powers for trivial investigations into residents' lives, the nadir of which was Gosport borough council's use of its park wardens to conduct secret filming of dog-walkers in parks (Wardrop, 2011), to prosecute miscreants who failed to clean up after their dogs had defecated,

¹ (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism)

and Allerdale borough council who covertly filmed delinquent pigeon feeders (Asthana, 2016). In the first eleven years of RIPA, public bodies conducted three million snooping operations on UK citizens, exposing both the bloated powers of the state's anti-terror surveillance powers, and the dangers to online pornography/SOI users, of getting caught up in a totalitarian state-style, mass spying operation.

John Stuart Mill's views on 'liberty' applied to SOI's

In the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill was a passionate advocate of free speech, which, for him, formed a bulwark against attempts by the state to erode the people's liberty. His famous definition of liberty contains within it the core of why online pornography/SOI's, and free speech, are entwined intrinsically together:

'The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it' (Mill, 1859, p. 23).

Many would argue that SOI's can be said to fall under Mill's maxim, if all those adults concerned in its creation, distribution and viewing, have given their free consent to participate, and no children were involved or harmed. When the state endeavours to ban these forms of free speech, it may be legitimately accused of coercive and tyrannical behaviour. SOI's may not be every adult person's predilection, but if people are pursuing their own happiness, freely and without harming others, then their actions appear to redound with the spirit of Mill's ideals on liberty. This argument shares many connections with the publication, and subsequent reaction to, the Wolfenden Report, in 1957, into homosexual and prostitution offences (Bull, 2008). The report controversially recommended the decriminalisation of homosexual acts between consenting men over twenty-one, and was rooted in Mill's central philosophical point from 'On Liberty', that the state had no right to criminalise

private, consenting adult behaviour that harmed no one else. Opponents of this viewpoint, such as Lord Devlin, countered that the state had every right to uphold the moral standards of society, and so outlaw and punish behaviour which was widely regarded as immoral and offensive. Such opposition was one of the reasons why the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report did not make it onto the statute book for a decade after its publication (Ibid). The freedom to view and create SGI's by consenting adults in private, falls firmly in the continuing shadow cast by the Wolfenden Report's adoption of Mill's approach to personal liberty.

UK laws, SGI's & 'The Snoopers Charter'

Theresa May's Conservative government in the UK has reacted to three ISIS led mass slayings in Paris and Nice in 2015/16, which left a total of 231 dead, by passing into law the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016, a.k.a. The 'Snoopers Charter'. This allows the security services to access the 'meta data' of individuals' internet usage (Liberty, 2015; The Telegraph, 2016; BBCEuropeNews, 2015; Travis, 2016). A similar manoeuvre had been killed off in the previous Coalition government by the Liberal Democrats over concerns about free speech, individual privacy and the growth of a surveillance state. However, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has subsequently ruled that holding indiscriminate 'meta data' for a year by ISP's for the police to inspect is illegal, in their ruling on the DRIPA 2014, which the IPA 2016 replaced in law (alongside the RIPA 2000), and is therefore subject to their jurisdiction (Bowcott, 2016).

The real challenge for online pornography/SGI's of all these recent developments may not be the growth of state restrictions, but rather an infectious atmosphere of self-censorship, which begins to first dampen, and then slowly extinguish the creative energies of the people (Cohen, 2015). If people become too afraid to publish the political and religious mockery seen in the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine, for

instance, through fears of potential terror-blowback, then it is fair to speculate that the next area to be dragged into this zone of self-censorship, could be the self-publication of SGI's (Willsher & Henley, 2015).

SGI's & their pedagogical role debate

The principal purpose of SGI's is not to promote the enhancement of users' erotic literacy, but to sexually stimulate the viewer, usually to the point of orgasm in a primarily auto-erotic situation. They are also sometimes employed as an erotic amplifier for sex between partners. These are the manifest functions. However, SGI's may also have unintended consequences, or latent functions, of positively promoting sexual awareness among some users, in addition to their many potentially negative impacts (Merton, 1968).

The role of SGI's as valid pedagogical instruments will be divided into two segments in this analysis. Firstly, the potentially damaging, though legal, impact on children in accessing online pornography, or taking part in the creation of illegal SGI's/IloC's will be examined. Are there any benefits from SGI's as an educational tool for adolescents, on the journey towards sexual maturation, or alternatively, are the deleterious consequences too preponderant? The second group analysed are adults, and the consideration that SGI's may be an important tool for the promotion of enhanced sexual pleasure for some users. A couple of caveats need to be issued before the discussion of these two categories can take place.

A 17yo in the UK is legally a child, but research has shown that younger people are amongst the biggest consumers of online pornography. There is a slew of research statistics on online pornography usage by children; two examples from the USA include: 80% of 15-17yo's admitted to having multiple engagements with hard-core pornography, and 90% of 8-16yo's admitted to viewing online pornography

(familysafemedias.com, 2014). In the UK, research led by Martellozzo et al (2016), on 1,001 11-16yo's, showed the lesser, but still substantial figure, of 65% of 16yo's having seen online pornography.

That 17yo in the UK may be using online pornography both to masturbate, and to raise their sexual awareness, in the same manner as an adult 18yo; neither are committing a crime, as there is no legal age limit at which online pornography can be viewed. Although there is a legal demarcation between child and adult, there is no definite point at which a person moves from being an adolescent to an adult. So, the legal age of being a child was arbitrarily raised from under sixteen, to under eighteen, in the UK in 2003 (Sytech, n.d.). Whereas a 16yo could vote in the Scottish independence referendum of 2014, but could not in the UK General Election of 2015 (scotreferendum.com, 2014). A 16yo could join the UK army (with parental consent), and theoretically be killed fighting for their country, but may not appear in SGI's, or view/possess them if there are other 17yo's in them (army.mod.uk, 2016). The amorphous conception of adolescence juxtaposes with the sharply delineated legal status of being a child.

Empirical research into SGI's remains scanty (until now), so often general online pornography is used as the only available resource for investigators. However, it needs to be considered that SGI's, and commercially produced online pornography, have many significant differences distinguishing them; whereas professionally produced commercial pornography may be guilty of creating unrealistic, distorted and sexist images, SGI's are amateur produced, using ordinary people's domestic settings and personal devices, and featuring their own bodies. A person sending/uploading a pornographic selfie, or appearing in webcam sex on Chatroulette, or posting a short sex-movie clip of themselves on a PornTube site, etc., is creating something which is far more proximate to reality than professional adult-entertainment. SGI's epitomize a demotic and protean force in the way pornography

is made, distributed, and used, and this fact arguably puts them in opposition to many of the intrinsic elements of their commercially made rival, which is often riddled with misogynist images, negative sexual roles and extreme sexual violence/language. SGI's are still part of online pornography, but undoubtedly, Citizen Porn is very much a revolution from below, offering realism over artifice (McNair, 2013), and can conceivably be equated with the great peoples protest movements from England's past, the Levellers (Rees, 2016) or the Chartists (Chase, 2007) etc. Although it is certainly possible that it is mainly those self-conceited enough to consider themselves sufficiently pulchritudinous, who are predominantly creating SGI's. Some people may be simply too neurotic about being body-shamed if they were to post sexual content of themselves online. SGI's may be made by the people, for the people, yet could, ironically, be just as unrepresentative of the true aesthetic looks of the people, as commercial online pornography.

SGI's & children

Dutch researchers Peter & Valkenberg (2008), have produced an impressive amount of empirical quantitative data based research papers on the topic of childhood and adolescent (13-20yo) perceptions, expectations and behaviour following exposure to online pornography. Adolescents who frequently view online pornography, are more likely to have greater feelings of sexual uncertainty (their views and values about sex change frequently), and their endorsement of the view, that casual sex is the best approach to find out about their sexual preferences, also rises commensurately with viewing online pornography. Furthermore, adolescent males viewed far more online pornography than their female counterparts, and had higher sexual uncertainty, and approval of casual sex rates, than females (Jochen & Valkenburg, 2008). The more Dutch adolescents were exposed to sexually explicit internet material (SEIM), the greater was their belief that it was a socially realistic representation of sexual activity,

as was the rate of agreement with the view that, sex was purely instrumental in nature, i.e.: physical rather than emotionally involving (Jochen & Valkenburg, 2010). A potential consequence when these adolescents become fully mature, is a negative impact on their sexual behaviour, if they become unable to distinguish between online pornography induced sexual fantasy, and real-life sex. However, it should be acknowledged that people mostly use online pornography for sexual stimulation, generally masturbation, so it may seem inappropriate to assume that anyone would refer to it as a pedagogical device for learning about adult relationships.

Research in the US found that when adolescents had visited sexually explicit websites (SEW's), their tendency to indulge in a range of sexually risky behaviours increased:

'Adolescents exposed to SEWs were significantly more likely to have multiple lifetime partners, more than one sexual partner in the last three months, used alcohol or other substances at last sexual encounter, and even engaged in anal sex' (Braun-Courville, 2009).

For children and adolescents there is a considerable body of research confirming that their perceptions of sex, views about women's roles and actual sexual behaviour, can all be changed significantly by the consumption of online pornography, and largely in negative ways. Exposure to online pornography for children has been shown to promote sexist and stereotypical views about women's gender and sexual roles. For girls, this involves copying fashion, media styles and behaviour patterns that are prevalent in online media (breast surgery, shaving and weight loss, etc.), and for the boys, increasingly viewing women as sexual objects, who will behave like the 'slutty' female models who feature in commercial pornography (Flood, 2009).

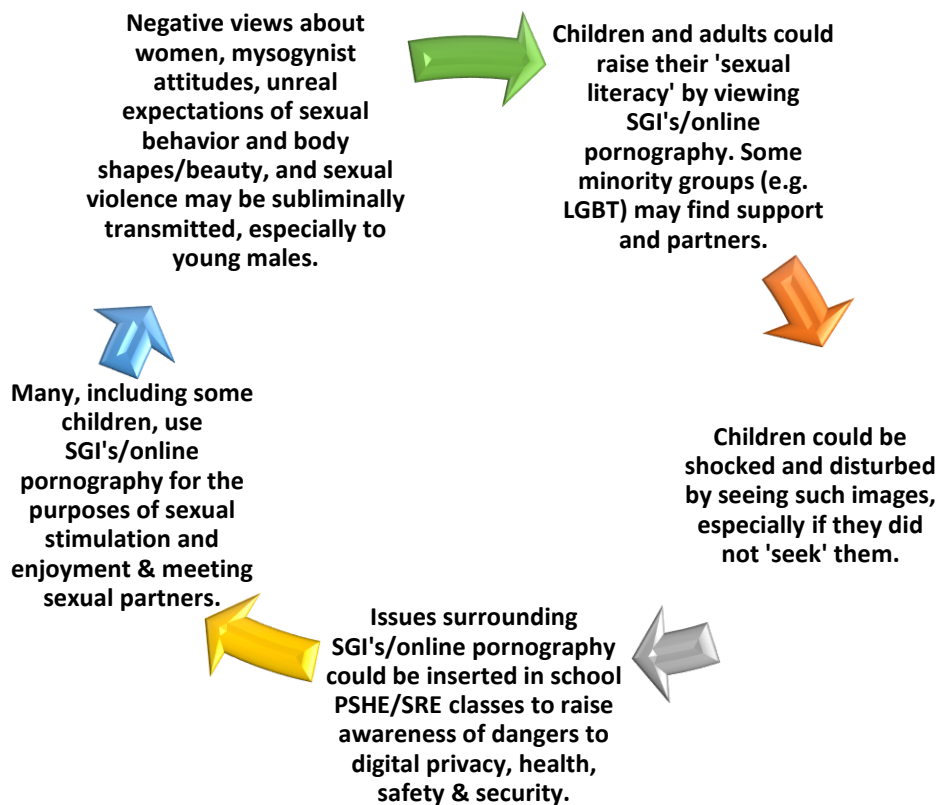


Figure 4 Positive and negative issues surrounding SGI's

There is also the important issue of the shock and upset which children often report when first exposed to online pornography. Martellozzo et al (2016) found that although curiosity (41.1%), was the largest response to first time viewing of online pornography among 416 UK 11-16yo's, shocked (26.5%), confused (24.4%) and disgusted (22.5%) were the next highest categories. Only 17.4% reported they had been 'turned on' by what they had seen. Those 41.1% of children seeking online pornography out of curiosity, certainly suggests an avid desire to learn more about sex. However, with the many negative impacts cited, the dangers can be significantly amplified for children using SGI's, as sexts can be sent and received inappropriately, or newsfeeds on SNS's flooded by sexually explicit and inappropriate postings, because of the accidental or deliberate acquisition of new Friends or Followers, who are strangers. Cyber-bullying, sextortion and cyber-trolling can follow children's (and

adults'), involvement in creating online SGI's. Offenders can take advantage of the desire of adolescents to have as many friends and followers on their SNS's as possible, to increase their status relative to their peers; in relation to this issue, size really does matter. Martellozzo et al (2016) also discovered that of 512 UK children, some 28% had seen online pornography involuntarily for the first time when it 'popped-up', as compared to 19% who had deliberately searched for it.

The distressing consequences of unwanted exposure to online pornography, particularly first time exposure, can be garnered from the following verbal responses all used by Australian children who found that unsolicited online pornography made them feel: *'Sick, shocked, embarrassed, repulsed and upset'* (Aisbett cited in Flood, 2009). Similar responses were discovered in UK children by Martellozzo et al (2016), although that study also found that such negative reactions fell away rapidly on subsequent viewings, as children built up considerable resilience to the images.

To reinforce the potential danger of SGI's to children, Mitchell et al (2007) in their US research, found that 18% of girls, and 8% of boys, had been the victims of attempts at sexual online grooming.

Unsolicited online pornography/SGI's can clearly cause deep emotional distress to the childhood victims of it, and the danger of harassment, CSA and sextortion from sexual solicitation is self-evident. A small number of high profile child-suicides have occurred after events, where children sent SGI's to online strangers; the Amanda Todd case in Canada being the most prominent (Wolf, 2012).

Can this surge in child viewing of online pornography/SGI's be rendered less hazardous by better PSHE/SRE in schools? SGI's, which are mainly accessed/viewed through mobile online devices, put children at far greater risk of accidentally viewing unwanted pornography; in addition, they also endow them with greater freedom to

intentionally seek it out, with more discretion and success, now they are not restricted to desktop PC's in the familial home.

SGI's & sexting

One area of SGI's that has attracted some researchers' attention recently is sexting. Interestingly, a sexual image must be present in the sext, for it to be counted as pornographic. A whole raft of adverse consequences has been variously identified as potentially flowing from sexting: cyber-bullying; revenge porn; suicide; self-harming; substance abuse while sending the sext; risky sexual behaviours; the production, distribution and viewing of IloC's; online child grooming; child sexual abuse; depression and relationship attachment issues (Ahern, 2013). Research on sexting in 2009 in the US, before the current proliferation of smartphones and tablets, revealed that 24% of 14-17yo's had received a nude image in a sext, from a sample of 1,247 (Knowledge Networks, 2009). Martellozzo et al's (2016) research, found that 134 out of 948 UK children had taken a full, or semi-nude photograph of themselves, and that 55% (74/134) of these had shared that image, either physically, or online, with another person.

SGI's & adults

The existence of online pornography/SGI's as a potential adult educator will now be discussed.

SGI's & gay/bisexual men's health

The role of explicit pornography in the promotion of safe sex, and decreasing sexual-health risks, was researched among the gay male community, in the Australian state of Victoria. Since the mid-1980's, explicit gay male pornography has used the 'Rubba me' campaign to champion the use of condoms during anal sex as a prophylactic against HIV/STI's and hepatitis (William, 2012). These sexual health education projects have however been criticized for promoting gay male eroticization, and for being misogynist in their portrayal of women (Albury, 2014). In the UK, recently, HIV infection numbers have been rising, and the most important causal factor is the growth of 'bare-backing' (condom-less anal sex). This may be due to the length of time that has passed since the hysteria over the AIDS 'epidemic' in the 1980's, or perhaps the now much greater survival rates of those who are infected with HIV due to better anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs. Hence, some 95% of new HIV infections in the UK in 2011 derived from sexual contact (NHS Choices, 2015). An estimated one-seventeenth, of men who have sex with men are HIV+, and they represent more than half of all new infections, despite being only 2-3% of the total UK population (NAT.org.uk, 2015).

SGI's are unquestionably a double-edged sword in this HIV sexual health issue. An estimated 18% of HIV+ 'men who have sex with men', are ignorant of their positive status (NAT.org.uk, 2015). Gay and bisexual men using SGI's may lead to increased casual sex via online hook-ups, through apps like 'Grindr' etc., and this results in greater magnitudes of risky sexual behaviour, particularly bare-backing. Additionally, worries are starting to emerge about the role of SGI's and the social/sexual recreational pastime of gay 'chemsex parties'. These are post-club/bar chill-out parties, or orgies, which gay men attend, after finding suitable participants, either by word-of-mouth, or on hooking-up apps, by frequently exchanging their SGI's. Such parties can go on for days, and drug-fuelled unsafe sex abounds, with

multiple sexual partners. The three main drugs employed are GHB², GBL³ and Mephedrone⁴. A survey of 874 chemsex party attendees in London found that one-third of them were HIV+, and that 45% of respondents had sex with a plenitude of between four-and-twelve men, per party (Halliday & Godfrey, 2015).

On the other side of the equation, SNS's and gay hooking-up apps, can be conversely used for health initiatives to reduce STI/HIV infections. Again, in London, it is estimated that one-eighth of men who have sex with men are HIV+, nearly double the average for the UK (NAT.org.uk, 2015). To combat this, the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT), the UK's leading HIV charity, has a Facebook page from which it sends out sexual health messages to those who follow it; meanwhile, Grindr regularly sends out pop-ups about sexual health when its gay/bi members log onto its mobile app (tth.org.uk, 2014; Grindr, 2014). Grindr had 698,252 active male users in London, in July 2015, most seeking sexual partners through exchanging SGI's (Grindr Marketing, 2015). The gay hooking-up app 'Hornet' (2017), has a prominently placed category on all profile pictures, where members can indicate both their HIV status, and the date of their last test.

Sexual health promotion measures to encourage the use of condoms in heterosexual commercial pornography have also been afoot recently, although these are primarily to protect the sexual health of the actors involved in the shoots (Albury, 2013). Los Angeles (LA) County passed a law in 2012, insisting that adult-entertainment actors wear condoms during filming, although this may have had the unintended consequence of just moving the problem elsewhere, as movie producers have redeployed out of the jurisdiction of its authority to evade restrictions. Thus, new shoots plunged from 485 in 2012, to only forty in 2013 (theguardian.com, 2014).

²Gamma Hydroxybutyrate

³ γ -Butyrolactone

⁴4-methyl methcathinone (4-MMC)

Ethical & Instructional SGI's?

A small, but often overlooked element of the commercial pornography industries' output, are adult educational titles. SGI's have latterly entered this niche arena too, with several amateur made instructional short sex-movies for couples, for free download, with titles including: '*Intense Positions*' and '*The Art of Fellatio*' etc. (YouPorn, 2014). Research on 229 subjects by Pareira (Eveleth, 2014), found stronger positive responses by subjects to such instructional pornography, rather than the non-instructional variety. The difference between the two being that the former is primarily designed to inform, educate and instruct, while the latter's *raison d'être* is to sexually stimulate the viewer. Similar SGI material is available on YouPorn for singles hoping to improve their future copulation skills and onanism techniques.

The concept of pedagogical pornography, or instructional pornography, overlaps in many ways with the parallel idea of ethical pornography. Here, pornography that is not misogynist, violent, abusive or dangerous to the actors, seems to place it into a category of good adult-entertainment. Anti-porn feminists believe that twinning the concepts of ethics and pornography is an oxymoron, due to the supposition that pornography is about male power over women: both physical power and economic power; the power to instil fear in women; the power of patriarchal males to own women and control the sex in a relationship (Dworkin, 1989). These views spawned a bitter sororicidal civil war among the second wave feminists, between rival anti-porn/pro-porn advocates, all campaigning for women's liberation in the 1970's/80's, whose intense mutual animus continues until today (Paasonen, et al., 2007). Ultimately, this led to the emergence of third wave feminism in the US in the 1990's, with ideas of 'Raunch Culture', i.e. liberated women employing sex and pornography to further their social and economic goals (Levy, 2005); and, free-market/post-modernist feminist ideas on erotic capital, by Hakim (Long, 2012).

Realcore online pornography & SGI's

The status of 'Realcore' pornography is of great relevance to SGI's credentials as pedagogical for adults. Realcore involves the amateur production of pornographic movie-clips, usually recorded in the actual home of the participants, often a couple, on digital camcorders/smartphones. It is probably the oldest format of moving SGI's, dating back to 1995, when affordable home video-recording/playback equipment became available. Before the internet, amateur made videotapes recorded on VHS camcorders were disseminated in a far more localised, hand-to-hand fashion. Realcore's participants usually appear without make-up, minus special visual or sound enhancements, without extra lighting, and those who feature in it are the antithesis of the 'plastic' aesthetic of commercial adult-entertainment. They are frequently middle-aged, sometimes overweight, and often hirsute, with unshaved, natural body-hair present. Realcore movies are usually un-edited, being continuously shot, and reflecting actual events in the sex portrayed. Performers often talk to the camera, while they copulate, providing an exposition on their feelings and actions. Realcore is readily available to download for free from the PornTube websites, and it is evident that: *'These images are radically different from industrial smut'* (Messina, 2010). Realcore had its genesis in small fetish communities, who made their own amateur material in the 1980's, to satisfy their own sexual peccadilloes, but also with the intention of reaching out to others. The origins of movie clip SGI's reside within Realcore, although it has now escaped its initial VHS bounds into the wider online SGI using community, who appreciate veracity, not facsimile.

SGI's, via Realcore, may be in the vanguard of promoting a wave of ordinary online people into making, distributing and viewing pornography that is more authentic, realistic, ethical, consensual and instructional than anything that commercial pornography producers have managed to produce since the launch of 'Playboy' in the early 1950's (Paasonen, 2011). Commercial pornography is dead, long live Citizen Pornography/SGI's (McNair, 2013).

Before we write the obituary of the commercial pornography industry, however, it should be noted that the sectors annual revenues may be expanding again, as profits are now being increasingly generated by PornTube downloads and advertising, and the cable/satellite TV channels offering Pay Per View (PPV) adult channels (ABC News, 2015).

To conclude, SGI's could well be pedagogical for some adults in terms of raising their sexual awareness and in enhancing their health protection. However, the picture for adolescents becomes much darker, with the presence of many more hazards, and fewer benefits.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the place of SGI's and online pornography within the free speech debate that continues to take place in the US/UK was set out. Supporters of citizens' rights to view, make and publish such images online believe they have the right to do so as part of their individual liberties, free from state interference. Such rights are believed to derive from the idea that pornography is an element of free speech, being merely an artistic expression of that concept. In opposition to this view, are a range of groupings who want to see SGI's/online pornography severely restricted, or banned totally. Such groups include anti-porn feminists, conservatives, and fundamentalist Christians, who collectively believe that the freedom to create and view such images online is undermining the nuclear family, promoting misogynist attitudes and leading to a growth of STI's and deviant sexualities.

Following this, the debate about the possible educational, or pedagogical role of SGI's was discussed. Again, controversy rages over this, as opponents of online pornography/SGI's believe that a range of negative consequences are inflicted on viewers, particularly those who are children. Adolescents who view SGI's may come

to think that sexual violence, verbal abuse, and warped views of how women should look and behave in bed, are the norm. Also, they could be used to pressure reluctant young females into sending SGI's of themselves to partners, or into having sex earlier in the relationship. Conversely, some children and young adults do enhance their sexual literacy by watching online pornography, a role that state education in the UK seems badly equipped to deliver via PSHE/SRE as of now. Likewise, the open discussion of issues surrounding SGI's could protect many potential victims from making serious errors of judgement in their future conduct. A fuller discussion of the dangers of SGI's to online health, safety and security, and to digital privacy could protect many adolescents from making irreversible errors in sending sexual selfies or webcam pictures, online.

The next chapter, examines SGI's through several abstract, theoretical stances, applying a range of political, sociological, economic, criminological and cultural studies theories to the issues they raise. Some are found wanting in their relevance, while others stand up more robustly to this process.

Chapter 3

SGI's & their theoretical context

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore SGI's through various theoretical lenses, to see if those abstract concepts have some relevance in attempting to understand their role and significance.

The research objectives of this study are to evaluate the impact that SGI's have on individuals and society, positive or negative, and in terms of a potentially neutral impact. Many of these theorists are long deceased, but their ideas have been re-examined and applied to the issue of SGI's/online pornography, to determine if they have any relevance in gaining an understanding of the potential outcomes for both individuals and society.

Marxism is used to examine the nature of exploitation represented by SGI's in relation to their individual creators, and the way capitalist society operates in terms of SGI's; the work of later Marxist, L. Althusser, and economist, J. Schumpeter's reinterpretation of Marx, will also be addressed in this context.

The ideas of three prominent Structural Functionalists are also analysed when applied to SGI's, to discover whether they may possibly have a 'socially useful' function for both creators and viewers, and for the social system in which we live.

In the 1990's, a new faction within feminism emerged from the civil strife among the second-wave 'sisters', the market liberal/post-structuralist feminists (a.k.a. 'third wave'). They applied ideas about women's liberation to women taking ownership of their own sex, and sexuality, and using it to advance their careers and finances. Their concept of erotic capital is applied to the Sugar Daddy websites, with their use of SGI's to conduct transactional relationships.

The rise of SGI's on hooking-up apps has led to a controversial new theory, known as the 'Dating Apocalypse'. The evidence for this theory will be examined.

Finally, the concept of the Social Construction of 'self' is applied to SGI's, particularly their role in creating multiple online personas, either legitimately, such as online gaming avatars, or illegitimately, in pursuit of criminal activities using fake ID's etc. With the rise of net-sex, where does the 'self' now lie, in the illusionary hall of mirrors that internet technology and anonymity has conferred?

Marxism & SGI's

The demotic nature of online SGI production allows us the opportunity to revisit the concepts of two founding sociological theorists. When Marx and Engels (2016) published 'The Communist Manifesto' in the mid-nineteenth century, they laid out a comprehensive and damning history of the exploitation of the clear majority of people, in all societies up until that time. They postulated that even though the actual composition of the binary system's minority ruling groups, and majority subjugated groups, has changed over time, nevertheless the basic relationship of a small elite exploiting the masses remains constant (Spalding, 2000). Capitalism is merely the latest economic 'epoch' in which such profiteering and inequality flourishes.

Are SGI's exploitative in terms of the parameters created by Marx and Engels? Those who produce and consume SGI's in modern western societies are not the victims of the kind of gross social and economic abuse that existed among the labouring urban workers during the mid-nineteenth century, when absolute poverty, communicable diseases, unemployment, hunger, squalor, an absence of welfare and economic uncertainty decimated the lives of most ordinary people in towns like Manchester (Engels, 1845). Rising living standards in the twentieth century resulted from technological changes, and automation in factory production methods, e.g. Fordism and Taylorism, etc. (Degan, 2011). These developments, rather than any redistribution

of wealth from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, led to a massive increase in the disposable income of the average UK household, which quintupled from 1954-2014 (tradingeconomics, 2014). In terms of Marx's 'Labour Theory of Value', economic exploitation takes place when the worker does not receive the full value of the work they have done, allowing the owners of the means of production to skim profit off the labour of their employee (Prychitko, 2008). For Marx, the only way to end this exploitative process, was to liquidate the class that owned the means of production, and to share profits communally between the workers.

Regarding SGI's, the issue of whether the amateur maker of pornography is being exploited can be split into two parts. Firstly, if you sell what you have produced and you are not remunerated to the full value of your work, then you have indubitably been ripped-off. This process has been transmuted, by an act of cunning prestidigitation by capitalism's bourgeoisie, from one of theft, into the socially approved concept of profit. To apply this to SGI's, therefore, if you were to make an amateur pornographic digital movie-clip on your smartphone, and then offer it for sale by download on one of the numerous online pornography platforms which exist for this purpose (i.e. 'PornHub', or 'Xhamster', etc.), then you would be the victim of exploitation as the web-hosting company will rake-off an amount, both to cover its costs and make a profit too. In the case of 'Xtube', this amounts to 50% of the sales revenue generated. This degree of economic exploitation may be far less than when Marx and Engels were writing in the mid-nineteenth century, and the penury of the workers commensurately less, but the basic abusive nature of the transaction remains identical. SGI producers who sell their product for less than it is worth, are the victims of exploitation in crudely Marxist specifications. This analysis is strenuously challenged however by adherents to the concept of the democratising power of the Web 2.0. They argue that 'YouPorn' and XTube, both launched in 2006, are merely transactional platforms which allow individuals free expression, and empower citizens to make money out of their own 'self-objectification' and 'immaterial labour'

(Mowlabocus, 2010). Indeed, critics employ Marx and Engels' own concept of the artisan under capitalism; uploaders of SGI's to the PornTube websites can be equated with artisanal self-employed skilled workers, who employ no one, and are not alienated or exploited in their work (Elster, 1986).

Here then is a further conundrum: if you make something and, of your own free-will, give it away for free for others to possess, how can you be said to be exploited? Contrarily, the act of receiving nothing at all for your work could be posited as an example of how capitalism subsumes all aspects of citizens' lives to its economic requirements, namely, the preservation of the system, the continuation of profits and prolongation of the unequal relations of production, or the reproduction of labour relations. Capitalism co-opts all aspects of workers' lives unto itself, subverting them towards its own ends. Hence, SGI's, either sold or given away freely, represent just one aspect of this situation, alongside many other facets: pleasure, leisure and recreation, sexual-desires and even the physical act of sex itself. Each is appropriated by capitalism, in a process of 'subsumption', and then transformed into just another component within the profit making, inequality preserving, nexus of the exploitative system. This theory assumes that capitalism subsumes not only the physical productive processes, but also those of social reproduction (i.e. education, sexuality, demography and communications, etc.) (Caffentzis, 2005). The subsuming process is, in part, conducted through the indoctrination of ruling class ideology, sponsored by the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) of capitalism, comprised of state education, religion, and the army, etc. (Althusser, 1970). SGI's, as another form of pleasure-leisure, are part of the exploitative process, primarily in terms of the cultural hegemonic domination over producers. Ultimately the dialectic between economic exploitation and liberation, regarding the production, sale or free distribution of SGI's, can only be resolved if the reader embraces the tenets of Marxism, that economic determinism controls all human action through its inescapable 'laws of society' (Conquest, 2008). However, the perception that capitalism has co-opted all aspects of

social reproduction, including artisanal pornography, into its cultural domination, may be challenged by a more contemporary analysis of postmodern capitalism that has much to commend itself to readers (Caffentzis, 2005).

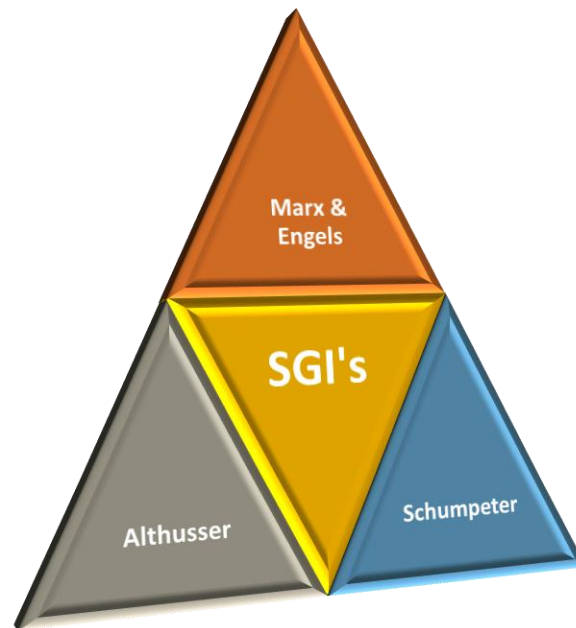


Figure 5 Marxist interpretations applied to SGI's

SGI's & Schumpeter's Creative Destruction

Marxist economist, Joseph Schumpeter, developed the theory of Creative Destruction to explain the way that mature businesses and industries in capitalism are constantly being destroyed and replaced by disruptive new forces. Schumpeter's (2003; 2009) ideas were a reaction to the Wall Street Crash of 1929, and the economic depression of the 1930's, when his pessimistic outlook for capitalism was focussed on his conviction that the capitalist economic system must soon inevitably collapse. This is of significance to SGI's in the online pornography industry, as the rise of free/amateur material is currently undermining the business models of both DVD distributors and

the adult-entertainment production studios. A parallel case to this process is the taxi-ride app 'Uber', which is eroding the traditional taxi monopolies of major cities throughout the world, by allowing smartphone users to summon a ride, at significant cost savings to the customer; although Uber's use of 'dynamic' or surge-pricing does occasionally make their prices rocket, during times of peak demand (Brickfield, 2015). Uber has been so successfully disruptive, that it now has 20,000 drivers in London, all paying 20-25% of their fares to the app's owner, and causing apoplectic fury among the city's squeezed, traditional black cab drivers (Hellier, 2015). Uber was valued at \$50 billion recently. The company operates in 351 cities, in sixty-four countries, and has a stupendous 1.1 million active 'driver-partners' (Harris, 2015). It is only the largest example of a plethora of new Gig economy online upstarts: 'Airbnb, Deliveroo, Hermes', and 'Just Eat', etc. (Paul-Edwards, 2013; Lichfield, 2015).

The recent increase in freely distributed SGI's in online pornography has inevitably led to some tumultuous upheavals within the profit-seeking companies and corporations which have previously straddled the commercial porn world like the Colossus of Rhodes (Clayton & Price, 1990). Furthermore, just as this ancient wonder of the world was toppled into the sea by an earthquake in 226 BC, so too the giants of internet pornography retailing, production, and distribution, now also find themselves teetering towards collapse, shaken by the economic and technological forces unleashed by citizens' employment of affordable, connected, mobile online devices, to make, publish, distribute and view home-made, artisanal pornography.

Schumpeter (2003) theorised that capitalism, to survive and evolve, needed to continually destroy its own industries and businesses, as the market quickly became saturated with the over-production of manufactured goods, resulting in a collapse of profits. To survive, therefore, a process of 'permanent revolution' is underway in capitalism (Trotsky, 1931). The creative destruction thesis maintains that capitalism cannot survive this intrinsic instability, and should, like a house built on sand,

eventually collapse (Schumpeter, 2009). To avoid this, old industries must be constantly annihilated, so that the new can rise like a phoenix in their place, in order that profits can continue to be generated. Existing businesses are hollowed-out from within until they collapse, like worm riddled tree-trunks. The successor industry matures to its acme, and then in turn, faces its own existential crisis, finally succumbing to the same fate. This cycle is a continuous process in capitalism, like the Ouroboros forever swallowing its own tail, stretching on into infinity, while its economic system endures, with profits merely shifted elsewhere, and never terminated. To prevent stagnation or economic collapse, the puissant process of ascent and subsequent destruction embodied by this cycle of innovation, is fundamental to capitalism (Schumpeter, 2003).

However, the economists' subsequent analysis went badly awry when he foretold the imminent demise of capitalism, due to an alleged diminution of the entrepreneurial spirit which was needed to lubricate the cycle of destruction. This would be caused, in Schumpeter's diagnosis, by a combination of factors including: the rise of big corporations; the alleged hostility of intellectuals to the economic system; and a shift away from direct property ownership to that of more intangible shares in joint stock companies (Ibid). Although, before we make an *ad hominem* attack on Schumpeter's abysmal forecasting abilities, it should be noted that as a group, economists who practice the 'dismal science' are almost universally dreadful at it. President Harry Truman once famously asked for a one-armed economist, so they would not be able to prevaricate by uttering, '*...on the other hand, this, and on the other hand, that*' (Buttonwood, 2010).

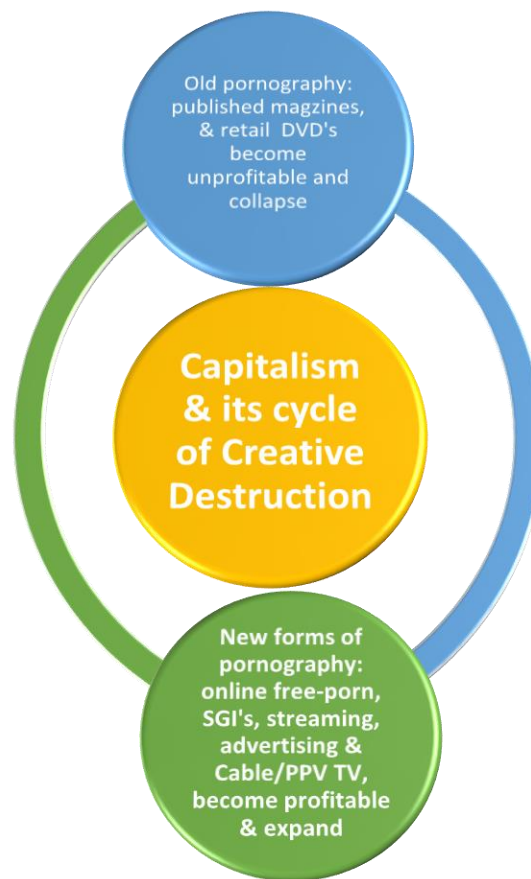


Figure 6 Schumpeter's cycle of Creative Destruction applied to SGI's

Creative destruction of the Lads' Mags & Kodak

The recent fate of Lads' Mags, in the soft-core pornography media industry, is illustrative of Schumpeter's thesis in action in modern society sixty years after the author's death. In their heyday, around the turn of the millennium, a whole stable of titles, including: 'Zoo, Nuts, Loaded, Maxim' and 'GQ', served-up to their predominantly male customers, a mix of glamour models, 'tits', sport and luxury cars. They exemplified Raunch Culture, with which modern media has become permeated, featuring: 'greased celebrities in little scraps of fabric humping on the floor' (Levy, 2005, p. 2). Lads' Mags, are an example of how soft-core pornography moved from the newsagents' top-shelves, to their middle ones, in what cultural studies theorists state is the variously named process of Pornification, Pornogrification, Striptease Culture

or Porno-Chic (Long, 2012; McNair, 2002; Paasonen, et al., 2007). The print version of 'Penthouse' magazine even relaunched itself in 1997 as a trendy men's life-style magazine, its editorial trumpeting that it was now: '*not your dad's wank mag*' (McNair, 2002). Today, all the Lads' Mags have been swept off the shelves entirely, having either closed completely, or discontinued their print versions, limping along with online only versions; they are pallid shadows of their former incarnations.

The collapse of DVD sales by half, since the mid-2000's, is yet a further example of Schumpeter's creative destruction, with some key high street retailers, and renters of mainstream DVDs (i.e. Our Price, Virgin, Blockbuster, etc.) also obliterated (Moye, 2013; de Castella, 2013). Digital downloads/streaming of online videos surpassed physical DVD/Blu-Ray sales in 2015, with sales of £1.3 billion, as compared to £894 million (Sweeney, 2017). Online piracy, streaming, free-pornography and SGI's are all in the vanguard of the causes of the collapse in sales of adult DVDs, along with the arrival of the superior Blu-Ray format. The PornTube sites provide a readily available gateway into this world of free online pornography. Their profits derive from enticing customers to buy longer versions, after making available a free teaser, and from the extensive advertising on their websites, gaudy banner advertisements and pop-ups, offering a myriad of sexual purchases. Huge profits are still being made from pornography, but they have migrated away from the adult-entertainment studios and retail distributors, to the owners of sites like 'PornTube' and 'RedTube', etc. Also, hotels chains continue to make millions by peddling their customers PPV pornography, available in 40% of all US hotel rooms; likewise, satellite and cable TV companies sell pornography channels to domestic customers (ABC News, 2015). Now ordinary people can make money if they can persuade online viewers to pay for downloads of their creations, or visit them on amateur Cam sites, where viewers pay performers to enact their instructions. The correlation between the rise of SGI's and free-pornography, and these online innovations, seems irrefutable, and is a salient

example of being ‘...in the perennial gale of creative destruction’ (Schumpeter, 2003, p. 83).

The most poignant and ironic illustration of creative destruction is Eastman Kodak, the US company, which filed for Chapter Eleven bankruptcy protection in 2012, although it did emerge as a leaner, debt-free entity (Daneman, 2013). Here is an example of a corporation that was destroyed by the digital technological hurricane, or ‘Schumpeter’s Gale’, that it had itself created. At its height, Kodak had a stranglehold on the sale and manufacture of film-based cameras and film to put in them. In 1976, they sold 90% of all film, and 85% of all cameras in the US. However, in 1975, their research labs had produced the world’s first digital camera, and so sowed the seeds of their downfall (The Economist, 2012). They failed to capitalise on the innovation of their own R&D Department, and maintained their film based strategy, ultimately becoming technological dinosaurs as their own invention was further developed by others. This, combined with the impact of the digital photo and video capabilities of first mobile, and then smartphones, caused Kodak to implode three decades on from its own digital invention (Snyder, 2013). Now, the digital cameras within smartphones are one of the main devices that have led to the explosive growth of SGI’s in online pornography in the last decade.

SGI’s & erotic capital

One sub-genre of the commercial dating or hooking-up website, is the phenomenon of the Sugar Daddy/Sugar Baby; in this, rich men (‘Sugar Daddies’), are presented with the images and details of younger women (‘Sugar Babies’), looking for ‘dates’ with them. Several such sites now exist, the largest being ‘SeekingArrangement.com’ (2015). Although the initial sign-up to these websites is usually free, members must then pay a monthly subscription to unlock even basic functionality for the use of the site. Although overt solicitation for sex in exchange for money is forbidden, the extent

to which this is policed is open to question, as confidential messages between those seeking to make a financial accommodation are kept private. Young women can receive up to £2,000 per month, on retainer, from each Sugar Daddy they make a deal with, in return for accompanying them for wining and dining, holidays, shopping trips, and sex (Kirby, 2015). This is erotic capital in action, whereby predominantly beautiful young women sell some of their sexual desirability to older affluent men, usually weekly if the contract is longer running than a single encounter. The concept of erotic capital conflates several theories: Cultural Capital from the Marxist thinker Bourdieu, cultural studies theories about the sexualisation of western culture, and a strand of free-market feminism, hailing the enabling and liberating power of women who use their sexual desirability to further their material, social and employment opportunities (Forsyth-Harris, 2013; Paasonen, et al., 2007; McNair, 2002). Bourdieu's ideas on Cultural Capital represent a view that the bourgeoisie uses its possession of social/cultural skills to ensure that its children, via education, inherit their parents' advantages, jobs and economic situation; thus, labour relations are inevitably reproduced (Lockwood, 2007). In the case of erotic capital, it is not augmented educational skills that are being utilised, but rather, physical attractiveness and winning personalities, for the advancement of those who possess them.

Catherine Hakim

The feminist writer most associated with the concept of erotic capital is the neo-liberal Catherine Hakim (Long, 2012). She is a product of the 1990's third wave of feminists who were vocally pro-porn, due to the alleged empowering and liberating freedoms it gave to women (Barker, 2000). They excoriated the anti-porn feminists, like Dworkin (1989), as 'Feminazis', because of their puritanical, anti-sex, anti-liberal, morally conservative, and antiquated stance towards pornography (Paul, 2005).

For Hakim, erotic capital is:

‘...a nebulous but crucial combination of beauty, sex appeal, skills of presentation and social skills – a combination of physical and social attractiveness which makes some men and women agreeable company and colleagues, attractive to all members of their society and especially the opposite sex’ (2011, p. 2).

Although the profile pictures on the Sugar Daddy websites are relatively demure and restrained, one of them (‘NaughtyRichSugarDaddies.com’), contains SGI profiles of the Sugar Babies which are far more sexually explicit, with a range of bare-breasts, suspender clad thighs, buttocks and splayed vaginas on display for rich Sugar Daddies who will pay for a potential ‘date’. Furthermore, this is just what is visible on the surface portal of the website, and it is not possible to know whether SGI’s are privately messaged online by those who haggle for transactional sex. Many Sugar Daddies, like any astute shopper, may want to ‘try before they buy’, and see all the goods proffered.

Radical and Marxist/Socialist feminists would certainly object to Hakim’s espousal of the idea that women can use their erotic capital to advance themselves successfully in a patriarchal, or class-based, exploitative society; Robin Morgan (2014) for one, asserted that pornography was rape, and so would undoubtedly repudiate Hakim’s ideas (Forsyth-Harris, 2013). Such transactional relationships, forming the mainstay of the Sugar Daddy dating websites, may be realistically denoted a convenient circumlocution for middle class prostitution. Working class sex-workers may ply their trade in the red-light districts of northern cities earning £30 for turning a trick, with either a curb-crawler, or a massage parlour customer. Sugar Babies, conversely, function as high-class escorts who visit hotels, selling sex to rich men for fees in the hundreds and thousands of pounds (A Very British Brothel, 2015). The question of whether all sexual transactions are equal is apposite, given that they can range from the £30 hand-job in a Sheffield massage-parlour, the £20 lap dance from a gyrating thong-clad, erotic dancer in one of the UK’s 300 lap-dancing/pole-dancing clubs, or to

a contract for hundreds of pounds struck on a Sugar Daddy website (Walter, 2010; A Very British Brothel, 2015). Certainly, Radical feminists have condemned the whole lap/pole-dancing phenomenon as nothing more than an extension of the exploitation of women by men, constituting the commodification of women's bodies via '*dancing pornography*' (Stella, 2011; Long, 2012). One researcher discovered that the UK's largest Sugar Daddy website, 'SeekingArrangement.com', with 240,000 Sugar Babies, and 20,000 Sugar Daddies, drew its largest female catchment from among university undergraduates (Kirby, 2015). The bifurcation between working-class prostitutes plying their massage parlour/street trade, and middle class educated Sugar Babies, using online SGI's, is sharply delineated.

The whole Sugar Daddies topic took on a murderous aspect when multimillionaire property developer Peter Morgan, aged fifty-four, was recently convicted of murdering sex-worker Georgina Symonds, aged twenty-five, at Newport County Court. Morgan's victim lived in a luxury bungalow he owned, and was paid up to £10,000 a month to provide escort services to him (Siddique, 2016). However, he strangled her to death when he suspected she was going to leave him, and after she had blackmailed him by threatening to send intimate SGI's of them, *in flagrante delicto* to his wife and children. Police uncovered thousands of sexts between the pair on the victim's smartphone, and a dossier of still SGI's and movies that she possessed. The case conflates the Sugar Daddy issue with sexting and sextortion in a malevolent cocktail that ultimately led to Symonds' murder, illustrating how for a minority, SGI's can be criminally abused, generating risky behaviour which becomes lethal (Ibid).

Tinder, Grindr & an SGI fuelled ‘Dating Apocalypse’?

‘Vanity Fair’ caused a massive stir in the media with an article, whose histrionic title *‘Tinder and the Dawn of the Dating Apocalypse’*, gives some flavour of the content (Sales, 2015). The article portrays contemporary New York, but it could be any cosmopolitan western city, filled with younger adults allegedly addicted to Tinder, the largest heterosexual mobile dating app with fifty million members worldwide. The app works by allowing users to see a picture of the physiognomy, or clothed upper body, of local fellow app-members of the opposite sex; the user then swipes either left or right to express their approval or disapproval of the image. When the other person also swipes that they like your picture, the app informs both, and then a date/sexual encounter can be arranged. Tinder is the most popular of many apps for heterosexuals, and Grindr the leader for gay/bi men (Parkinson, 2015). The transcendence of the mobile dating app transpired in 2012, when the number of mobile daters using these apps first overtook those using more sedate PC/laptop based dating websites like eHarmony etc. The instant swipe feature of the photo profile on Tinder, offering little or no personal details, quickly surpassed PC based dating websites which burden their customers with copious quantities of user information. It is estimated that 70% of dating/hooking-up activity is now conducted on smartphones (Wood & Butler, 2016). The year 2012 was also the launch date of Tinder in the UK, as it transposed the concept of a casual mobile dating app for heterosexuals from its gay predecessor, Grindr, which had launched in 2009 (Vernon, 2010). The profile pictures on Grindr of gay men are far more sexualized and erotic than their Tinder counterparts, with a profusion of bare chests, abdominal muscles, bulging underwear and semi-nude shots on display, and ‘private’ galleries of full nudity/erections are present, but hidden, until the contact is given permission to see these hidden SGI’s.

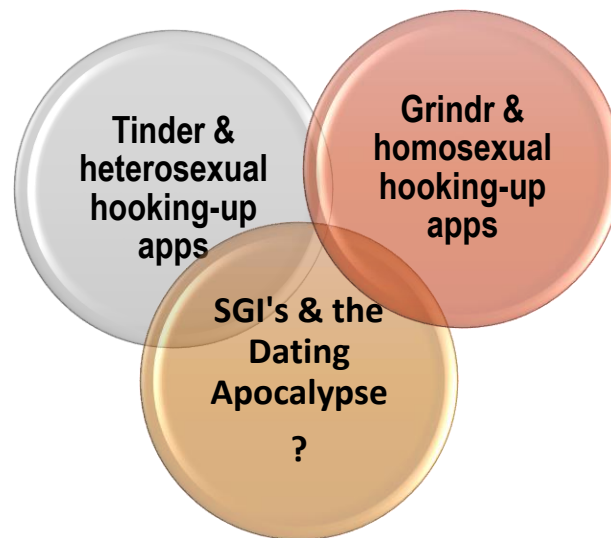


Figure 7 The Dating Apocalypse theory, caused by SGI use on hooking-up/dating apps?

The postulation underpinning the dating apocalypse hypothesis is that mobile app users are now able to gorge themselves on a promiscuous glut of casual sex, all based merely on looks. Personality, charisma, conversation and mutual interests are all now extraneous, replaced once contact is established by a terse and blunt text invitation, typified by these examples: 'Wanna Fuck'? or 'Come over and sit on my face' (Sales, 2015). Traditional dating may be being expunged by a libidinous orgy of fornication, fuelled by the lubricious nature of casual sex-facilitating mobile apps, and SGI's.

The proximity paradigm for dating that, hegemonic since the dawn of human civilisation ten-thousand years ago, meant you could only meet a limited number of sexual partners in your locale during your lifetime, may have been overthrown by the mobile dating app (Cochran & Harpending, 2010). This is an era of 'Tinder Kings', males' adept at serial sex acts with women, and 'Tinderellas', women willing to indulge in instant carnal congress (Sales, 2015; Edwards, 2015). Mobile dating apps may be returning human society to the condition of early humans who lived in the promiscuous hordes that characterised ancient societies (Lewellen, 2003). This would represent a Tinder/Grindr fuelled sexual free-for-all, of mass, unrestricted debauchery. Such is the antithesis of modern family life, clustered under a universal

function, and defined as small kinship groups primarily concerned with child nurturing and socialisation (Reiss, 1965).

There is circumstantial evidence to support the mobile dating apocalypse thesis. In September 2015, Tinder wrote to the US Aids Healthcare Foundation, demanding that it stop using its name on an advertising campaign that the sexual health charity was running in LA. The names of Tinder and Grindr were superimposed onto shadow couples kissing, along with warnings about contracting a range of STI's (Brait, 2015). However, the Rhode Island Department of Health produced a report attributing a rise in STI's in its jurisdiction, between 2013-2014, to the use of mobile dating/hooking-up apps: syphilis was up 79%, gonorrhoea up 30%, and new HIV infections up 33%.

In the UK, the ONS announced a 73.5% increase in users of hooking-up/dating apps between 2009-2014, and around 25% of adults now use the sites (Observer Lifestyle, 2015). However, the picture of a Tinder created explosion of casual sex-fuelled STI's, is contested, with at least one author refuting the concept as a moral panic. In this interpretation, it merely reflects the greater number of people who now get tested for such diseases at sexual health clinics; simply put, more tests find more instances of STI's (Hancock, 2015).

Functionalism & the possible social uses of SGI's

Some of the theoretical assumptions of former leading lights of sociology and criminology can be reinterpreted for SGI's, particularly authors such as E. Durkheim, K. Davis and R.K. Merton, who often relied on a 'Grand' or 'Middle Theory' approach, avoiding any actual primary research and empiricism, in favour of Cartesian Rationalism (Descartes, 2008).

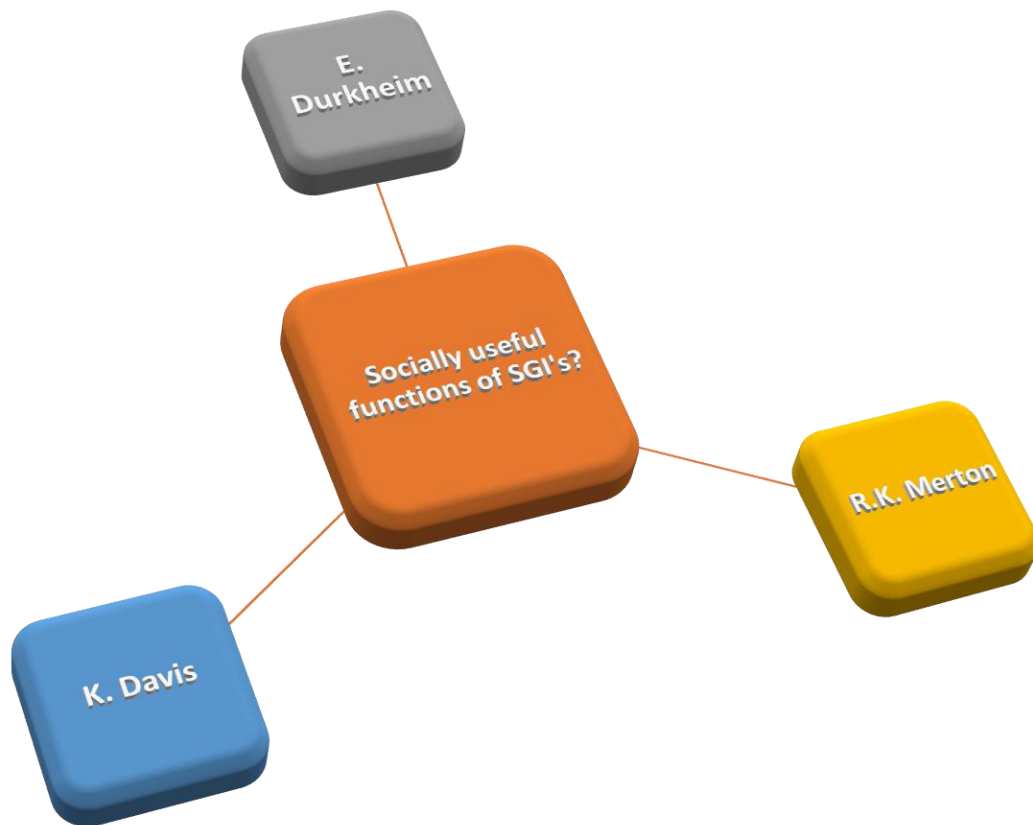


Figure 8 Structural Functionalists' ideas applied to SGI's

Emile Durkheim

To harness some of Durkheim's concepts to the role of SGI's, it is first necessary to identify an analogue topic. The Frenchman's writings on crime and deviance in society are thus germane here, as he maintained that a modicum of each was a crucial prerequisite for our civilizations continuance:

'For it to evolve, individual originality must be allowed to manifest itself. But, so that the originality of the idealist who dreams of transcending his era may display itself, that of the criminal, which falls short of the age, must also be possible. One does not go without the other' (Durkheim, 1895, p. 70).

Durkheim believed that an acceptable level of crime is necessary for society to avoid stagnation or chaos. The maverick entrepreneurs and inventors, who drive social progress forward, are the flip-side of the coin to those villains who indulge in crime and deviance. In this vision, some crime is both normal and necessary, unless our society is to become sclerotic and ossified (Hamlin, n.d.). However, too much crime leads to the disintegration of the body politic, and too little leads to stagnation. Crime levels must be 'just right', within the idyllic 'Goldilocks Zone', between these extremities. Some crime and deviance also allows most people to share their values about the necessity of obeying the law, and to communally enjoy the public spectacle of transgressors being tried and punished, whether at the theatrical public hangings at Tyburn in London (Brooke & Brandon, 2005), or in TV trials like that of O.J. Simpson etc. (Toobin, 2016).

Is a similar situation extant with online pornography/SGI's? Some pornography may be an absolute requirement for social stability to be maintained, and for innovation and progress to flourish. I. Tang (1999) has mapped the history of pornography, from ancient antiquity to the internet age; she discovers that it is seemingly ever-present from Ancient Greece, via Ancient India (where the worlds' oldest pornographic manual originated in the third century AD), and right up to online SGI's (Hardgrove, 2008). Technological breakthroughs in communications have successively led to the ever-wider dissemination of pornography to the masses; in a direct line leading from the Guttenberg printing press, to the online smartphone. Pornography was always there, and always will be (Tang, 1999). The contention is then that, pornography (and now online SGI's), due to its very ubiquity in all human history, must be necessary for maintaining a healthy society. Critics of this supposition would say there is a tautological flaw in this logic; pornography exists because it is normal and healthy for society, and therefore it was manufactured with this purpose in mind by the external social system. In effect, any Functionalist analysis such as this, is open to the twin critiques that it both tautological and teleological. In the former criticism, why does

pornography survive? Because it is functional. How do you know it is functional? Because it survives (Bailey, 1992). The latter criticism (of teleology), states that any Functionalist analysis of pornography/SGI's, probably lacks any true investigation into the laws of cause and effect. Rather, something fulfils a need in society and therefore it exists to fulfil that need. Always mindful of this critique, let us assume for the sake of argument that pornography, and latterly SGI's, by their continued existence and historical presence, do perform useful services within our society, what could these be?

Kingsley Davis

Davis (1937) seems to furnish an answer to this question. He provides us with a specific example of sexual behaviour, namely prostitution, containing both crime and deviance that appertains to this current inquiry into SGI's. Pornography and prostitution are both sexual in nature, share the commonality that they have both been largely perceived as deviant, and frequently criminal too. Furthermore, prostitution, as 'the oldest profession', means that the two may have coexisted in lock-step, since the dawn of civilization. It certainly seems plausible to draw an analogy between prostitution and pornography here. Prostitution is presented by Davis (Ibid) as a largely victimless crime, being nothing more than a simple contract between 'harlot' and punter. The former gets paid, and the latter acquires a sexual release usually unobtainable without marriage or a partner. Research estimates that there are currently eighty-thousand prostitutes working in the UK, and that 10% of adult males have paid for sex (Morris, 2008). Both social needs and individual needs are satiated by this harlot/punter private but 'deviant' transaction, so Davis asserted. Consequently, society does not see a potentially destabilising level of marital breakdown, rape, sexual assaults or sexual offending against children, as sexually frustrated men can predominantly have their carnal requirements assuaged by the existence of a phalanx of willing, and available, prostitutes. The prostitute's

impecunious financial problems are rectified too, stopping them turning to other, far more damaging forms of crime, to fulfil their economic deficiencies. For:

'...prostitution is, in the last analysis, economical. Enabling a small number of women to take care of the needs of many men, it is the most convenient sexual outlet for an army, and for the legions of strangers, perverts, and physically repulsive in our midst. It performs a function, apparently, which no other institution fully performs' (Davis, 1937, p. 755).

It takes little effort to expand this supposition, to encompass online pornography/SGI's. Nowadays, the sexual needs of online users of pornography are being efficiently gratified, without the demands of finding and paying a prostitute. Some regard this process as being deviant, although largely it is not criminal. In the UK, 'soliciting'⁵ to sell sex is illegal, although payment for sexual acts is not (cps.gov, 2016). Looking at the SGI situation through Davis's prism, if online pornography were not available, then many more men could be out in their cars kerb-crawling and attempting to engage the services of a street prostitute or a massage parlour worker.

'Red-light' areas of cities are notorious for their annoyed and harassed residents, crime, drugs, sexual violence and, very occasionally, the murder of street prostitutes. The cases of the 'Yorkshire Ripper' (Peter Sutcliffe) in the 1970's, and the 'Ipswich Ripper' (Steve Wright) in 2006, spring to mind as infamous examples of the mortal dangers to working street-girls (Bennetto, 2006; Steel, 2014). If online pornography/SGI's were successfully banned or restricted, might there not be a commensurate rise in the panoply of sexual crimes afflicting people and society, such as rape, sexual assault, and CSA etc.? However, somewhat undermining this hypothesis, is the fact that in the year to 2014, in England and Wales, sexual offences rose by 17%, and rapes by 20%, in contrast to a 15% fall in overall crime levels (Travis,

⁵ Under section 16 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, which amended the 1959 Street Offences Act.

2014). However, these rises in sexual crimes, in an age of free access to online pornography, may simply reflect greater reporting levels, rather than an increase in actual incidences. Conversely, online pornography has been proclaimed as being a great anti-depressant for bored and sexually frustrated husbands, and an effective glue which binds empty-shell marriages together (McNair, 2013).

Applying Davis's ideas on prostitution to online pornography/SGI's demonstrates that the phenomenon may be deviant, but its absence could be inimical to the healthy continuation of society.

Robert K. Merton

Merton's 'Strain Theory' certainly has something to contribute, when inquiring into the potential beneficial consequences of SGI's. The author laid out a fivefold taxonomy of responses by citizens to the cultural goals of American society. Four of these were deviant and one was legitimate, that of 'conformism'. For SGI's, we can legitimately draw a correlation with Merton's 'innovation' response. Here, when a person cannot attain the desired goals of their society by honest means, they may instead innovate to achieve their aspirations, by turning to crime and deviance. Hence, Al 'Scarface' Capone, from prohibition era Chicago, who could not achieve business success by honest means, adopted instead the illegitimate approaches of bootlegging, extortion, racketeering, bribery and violence (Downes & Rock, 1995). Capone is exceptional in the scale of his success and the extreme nature of his criminal adaptations; yet many ordinary citizens deviate/innovate on a far more banal level:

'This involves the use of conventionally proscribed but frequently effective means of attaining at least the simulacrum of culturally defined success, - wealth, power and the like. As we have seen, this adjustment occurs when the individual assimilated the

cultural emphasis on success without equally internalizing the morally prescribed norm governing means for its attainment' (Merton, 1938, pp. 672-682).

If these propositions about innovation are accurate, then they may be successfully applied to SGI's. For, where people cannot satiate their sexual needs by the normal and socially approved mechanism of acquiring a sexual partner, they then turn to a more deviant method instead, by masturbating to online SGI's/pornography. Millions of SGI users through the lens of Strain Theory, are merely innovating in finding an alternative path to the widely accepted social norm of attaining sexual satisfaction.

Strain Theory has attracted many criticisms down the decades, however. For example, we can question what makes an individual choose one of the five responses to the demands of social goals (Lilly, et al., 2011). Also, many relevant aspects are ignored: social conflict; social interactions between group members; conformity; white-collar crime and the labelling process performed by powerful groups. Finally, the existence of a common widespread culture in the US, encapsulated as 'the American Dream', is assumed (deviance.socprobs.net, n.d.).

Nevertheless, Merton was a major contributor to expanding Structural Functionalist theory in his discussion of the notions of non-functions and dysfunctions (Mongardini & Tabboni, 1998). Both these concepts are relevant to our discussion of SGI's, as they open the debate around online pornography's potential neutrality in terms of consequences and purposes; also, the potentially damaging unintended outcomes that it can cause, such as: distorting users' perceptions of what 'normal sex' is like; the danger of children accessing it; its use by adults seeking to groom children for CSA; the dangers of revenge porn; and the potential for blackmail and sextortion etc.

SGI's & the Social Construction of 'self'

In chapter five (research methodology) of this thesis the ontological and epistemological debate surrounding the social construction of reality will be discussed. However, a consideration of what exactly is meant by the 'self' within SGI's is now appropriate. People who participate in sex through the online medium have, in many instances, transcended the restrictions of their biologically dictated sex, gender, age, or any other potentially defining social or demographic characteristics, when they adopt a different role or persona in net-sex. Such actions can involve: employing a fake picture or inaccurate personal characteristics on a SNS profile or web-chatroom; lying about your age on a hooking-up/dating app; employing an avatar while playing web based massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) like 'Half-Life' or 'World of Warcraft' (WoW) etc., the latter having had an active subscriber base of 7.4 million in the third quarter of 2014 (Statista, 2014). Furthermore, online grooming by predatory paedophiles is often conducted with a fake ID/photo to dupe under-age victims into either sending sexual photographs of themselves, or attending a meet-up. Ironically, the tables have been turned on some of these online offenders as online law enforcement officers, like those in SOECA, have created avatars to engage with the offenders, and prosecute them. Even vigilantes have emerged online, using avatars of fake children, to persuade the groomer into attending a meeting where they are promptly confronted by adults armed with a digital camcorder, instead of the expected child. The footage of the 'ambush' is then uploaded onto Facebook, and handed over to the police, whose official position on such vigilantism is to discourage such activities, as they could affect the validity of evidence in any prosecution of the alleged offender (C4, 2014).

Disturbingly, convicted gay serial killer, Stephen Port, used around twenty-five different avatars on gay hooking-up apps like Grindr and Hornet etc., all with false names, ages and photographs, to lure young men to his flat in Barking, East London,

where he murdered four of them after administering a poison, and raping them (Davies & Laville, 2016).

The scope for the creation of alternate selves within SGI's, is immense. G. H. Mead is attributed with launching the modern debate that the 'self' is created through social intercourse, and social interaction with others (Zahavi, 2009). The phenomenological idea that self-consciousness and self-awareness are the subjective and interactive creations of a person's experiences, is embodied by the philosophical ideas of Edmund Husserl. The study of human consciousness, from a phenomenological perspective, is the quest to comprehend the subjective point of view of those who experience things (Smith, 2013). By this axiom, if those role-playing online with alternate selves perceive their alter-egos to be real in some way, then those alter-egos are as valid as the actual persona inhabited in the corporeal world. Online SGI's may have begat a new era of manifold-selves, where some have splintered into genuine multiple personalities syndrome, rather than being victims of the rare, and controversial, medical diagnosis of Dissociative Identities Disorder (DID) (psychologytoday.com, 2015).

The ability to mask, change and blur what it is to be a person, through SGI-embracing avatars, has introduced a whole new category of sex into the lexicon, namely that of having 'outercourse', discrete from earlier forms of physical intercourse (Waskul, et al., 2004). With online SGI's, the social construction of self, or rather its polymorphous online reconstruction, has reached its apogee. The meaning of the self to the individual, altering their identity with online SGI's, is negotiated between the avatar's creator, and the other/s they are interacting with for sex.

Erving Goffman

The Symbolic Interactionist ideas of Goffman, concerning the negotiation of meanings, can be legitimately applied to online SGI's, i.e., how people negotiate and validate their identities when meeting each other, and create frames within which they can work out the meanings of these interactions (Miller, 1995). Such physical interactions are now totally swept away, when reconstructions creating an online avatar are adopted, and those using SGI's to have net-sex, never actually meet corporeally. However, as Goffman was more focussed on the idea of how physical interactions generate conflict, stigmatisation and ultimately lead to labelling, in contrast to Mead, who viewed the interaction process as leading to a degree of harmony between social actors, then Goffman's conceptualisation still stands-up when applied to the use of avatars and SGI's in the online realm (Appelrouth & Edles, 2012). If some people are misusing the ability to create different cyber-selves, then discords will indeed arise, as illustrated by Port's use of a plethora of different avatars with fake pictures on his killing spree (Davies & Laville, 2016). Goffman's ideas seem apropos, as conflict in the use of online avatars has perhaps reinforced long-held social stigmas about gay men's sexual perversity, and predatory sexual behaviours. Online multiple selves, could have buttressed the labelling of gay men as promiscuous and risk taking, attitudes which had been relatively quiescent since the HIV/AIDS panic of the 1980's (Shilts, 1987).

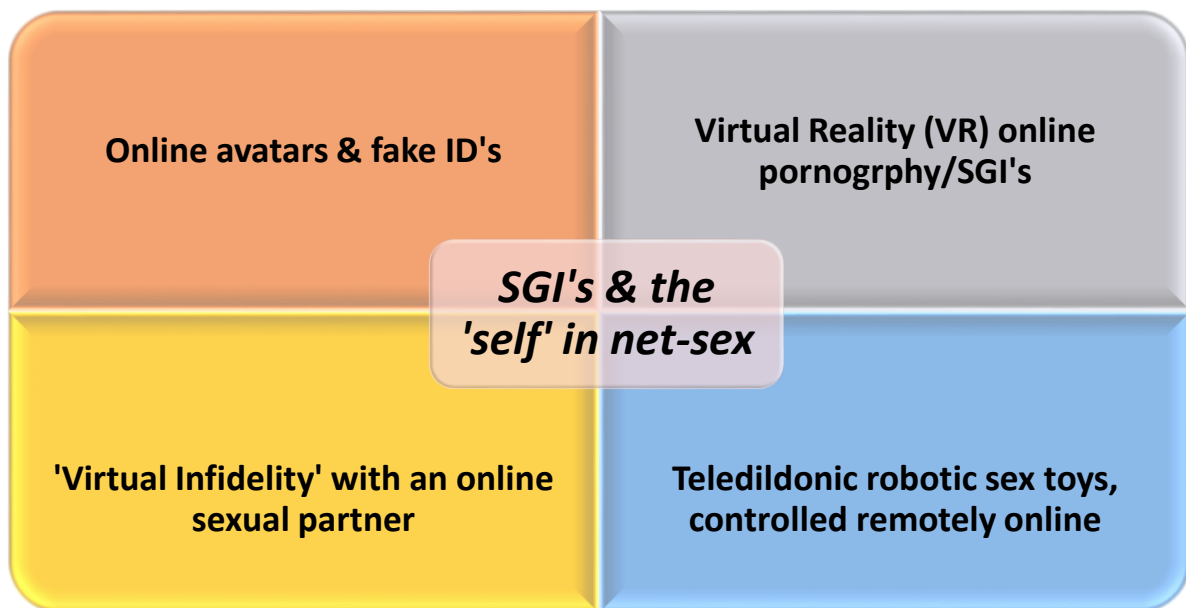


Figure 9 SGI's & the online Social Construction of the 'self'

Virtual Reality: A new perspective on SGI's...

The year 2016 may have been the moment when Virtual Reality (VR) finally makes a breakthrough with online consumers, as the release of the 'Oculus Rift' VR headset (for only £549) offered users, for the first time, an approximately real experience, featuring 3D and 180° panoramic/stereoscopic vision (Rosenblum, 2014; Egan, 2016). Aimed initially at the online computer games market, VR headsets were quickly adopted by commercial online pornography producers. Websites selling 'Virtual Real Porn' already exist (virtualrealporn.com, 2015). With the Oculus Rift, VR is on the cusp of overcoming previous technological disappointments, and the era of fully immersive 3D stereoscopic virtual pornography/SGI's is imminent (Dredge, 2014). When William Gibson (2015) invented the term 'cyberspace' in the 1980's, did he envision that fully immersive, VR cyber-sex, with SGI's, would soon come to pass?

The commercial pornography industry has produced several teledildonic devices in recent years, such as the 'Fleshlight VStroker' etc.; electronic/robotic phalluses, controlled by another online person (vrsexspot.com, 2014). Apps already exist on

smartphones which allow teledildonic devices to be controlled, via Bluetooth connections, either solely by the device's processor, or by interfacing online to other human users, for remote control (futureofsex.net, 2011). This means another internet connected individual, could minutely control these robo-dildos attached to a smartphone, giving a whole new meaning to the term 'phone-sex'. The implications of teledildonics for online pornography/SGI's are startling, as people can now sexually stimulate each other with their remote controlled robotic phalluses, as part of a truly interactive, and intimate physical process; all while mutually exchanging live SGI images with their net-sex partner. Auto-erotic self-stimulation may be rendered passé, by the rise of the remote controlled online robo-dildo. Anthony (2014) has prophesied that robotic sexual partners, or 'Sex-Bots', will be common by 2025, with people having sex with these Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled androids. After all, thousands of anatomically correct inanimate sex-dolls have already been manufactured in California, and sold online, by the 'Real Doll' company (Holt, 2005).

When the new Oculus Rift VR headsets are used in combination with teledildonic devices, SGI's could be taking human beings to a place which is a quantum leap forward. Added to the predicted rise of Sex-Bots, this may all represent a singularity event, a new 'Big Bang' when everything changes; SGI's are at the very centre of this oncoming vortex. And, all while internet access has become near-ubiquitous in western society, reaching 42% of the entire global population in 2015 (Naughton).

'Virtual Infidelity' with SGI's

SGI's have also thrown up the utterly modern phenomenon of 'virtual infidelity', with its alleged negative impact upon marriage and relationships. Virtual infidelity occurs where one monogamous partner, has been surreptitiously conducting a sexual relationship with a third-person online; perhaps as webcam-sex, or exchanging SGI's (Gunther, 2013). The trenchant question is this: if you masturbate with an online

person, but never physically meet them, are you committing adultery? Research into this is scanty, but a dated Swedish study in 2005, of 1,828 web-users found that one-third of them had indulged in cyber-sex, with those in relationships, equalling the singles in incidence rates. Additionally, a 2008 Australian study of 183 people, who were in, or were recently in, relationships, found that 10% of the sample had formed intimate relationships online, 8% had practiced net-sex and 6%, had met their internet-sex intimates in person (Smith, 2011). Many online commercial organizations already exist, such as 'savemymarriage.com' (2015), etc., as vendors of therapy workshops and seminars to those whose marriages are purported to be under strain from virtual infidelity.

After this section, it is fair to question where the real 'self' will reside, behind potentially myriad layers of SGI reconstructions, facilitated by VR and teledildonics (Rheingold, 2004).

Conclusions

The main findings of this chapter in relation to the aims of this SGI investigation are: firstly, the core Marxist analysis about the nature of exploitation under capitalism does not stand up when applied to an individual's self-creation of amateur pornographic images. However, in two aspects, there is some applicability. Firstly, the idea that capitalism subsumes everything into itself, encompassing even social factors like sex, desire, pleasure and joy. Secondly, the later Marxian economic analysis by Schumpeter, does have great relevance in explaining how the rise of online free-porn and SGI's has helped to destroy the old giants of commercial pornography, the adult-entertainment studios, and the DVD retailers and renters. They have been displaced by both individual artisanal creators of SGI's as 'immaterial labour', and by new commercial enterprises like the owners of the PornTube sites. Media and cable companies too are making millions from the rise of online streaming and adult-

entertainment PPV/cable TV. Despite this, the second part of Schumpeter's analysis, involving the imminent doom of capitalism, has transpired to be a fallacious nostrum.

The idea of erotic capital is extremely contentious, in relation to SGI's. On the one hand, it can be perceived as a liberating force for women, who use their assets to advance their economic and social power. Alternatively, opponents believe that 'transactional relationships' are nothing more than a convenient euphemism for middle class prostitution.

The Dating Apocalypse theory, that hooking-up apps have changed the whole dating game irrevocably for young adults, is both contentious, and interesting. However, it is based on anecdotal observations, and not empirical research. This flaw will be addressed in the results chapter of this thesis, where the idea will be put to the test, and findings revealed to either prove or disprove the theories veracity.

The fact that SGI's could be accorded a 'socially useful' function, from the perspective of Structural Functionalism, seems to have a great deal of legitimacy for this theoretical application. The ideas of Kingsley Davis seem the most lucid in terms of their pertinence to SGI's, when the author's forthright views that prostitution, although deviant, still has a beneficial impact on individuals who could not get sex by conventional means, and for the prostitutes, who could not earn money by more licit means either. Society also greatly benefits from this safety valve. SGI's seem to fit comfortably into Davis's theoretical construct.

Finally, net-sex in the modern era seems to be offering a divisive duality for online users and creators of SGI's. The ability to hide, mask, or blur the 'self', affords great opportunities for those who wish to indulge in net-sex for legitimate sexual stimulation. However, online criminals can easily abuse the opportunities presented by the ability to create avatars and fake ID's, even to the point of murder.

Leading on from this last stated point, the myriad ways that online offenders can abuse SGI's for their criminal purposes is the subject matter of the next chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 4

SGI's & their role in online criminal offending

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the multiple ways that online offenders have abused SGI's for criminal purposes. Such a discussion impacts directly on the goals of the investigation, as it examines the harms and hazards which children and adults can experience when those images are abused by online criminals.

It begins with an examination of the nature of paedophilia, as this is relevant to how society could prevent online SGI users from transgressing into offending behaviour with CSA and IIOC's.

Next, the role of SGI's in the activities of those who conduct illegal cyber-bullying and trolling is discussed, and the potential harms for victims of these crimes examined.

Cyber-hacking, seemingly an enigmatic topic to be included here, is very germane as the individuals who are its victims, usually celebrities or sports stars, can find personal data, including privately taken intimate SGI's, stolen and released online for public perusal.

One of the main sources of SGI's that end-up in the clutches of cyber criminals are sexualized selfies. They are often sent 'privately' to a trusted partner or friend, but then are frequently leaked, without permission, to third parties, before potentially ending up online for all to observe. The crime of revenge porn is totally dependent on this form of SGI selfie. Some sex partners exact a belated vengeance by uploading the images they were sent while the relationship was successful, onto revenge porn websites. Leaked, privately sent, sexual selfies, and uploaded revenge porn images can be highly detrimental to a victim's mental and physical health, and even life.

SGI's can feature in cyber-stalking, as they are often stolen, or harvested, from the SNS's of the victims, without their permission. They are then used as weapons in the campaign of harassment that perpetrators of online stalking execute against their victim.

Finally, the little-known topic of the online romance fraud is examined. Undoubtedly, SGI's are an element in this scam as fraudsters exchange images and messages with their internet lover.

SGI's: Paedophilia, online CSA & IloC's

Many who believe there is a correlation between paedophilia and IloC's online, would like to enforce censorship on online pornography, or alternatively introduce an 'opting-in' facility when signing up for a contract with an ISP (UN Women, 2015). Furthermore, enhanced parental controls on children's access to pornographic websites have been advocated by many anti-pornography campaigners, their claims reinforced by statistics such as these from Childline, which announced that there had been a 250% increase in the number of child counselling sessions about online CSA, from 2013 to 2016 (PA, 2016). Advocates of such views base their demands on the supposition that online pornography/SGI's comprise either a gateway to offending behaviour, or easily become one of the tools manipulated by dedicated online sex offenders as part of their 'cycle of abuse' driven activities; such ideas derive from the ideas of David Finkelhor, whose model of how CSA functions has held great sway since the mid-1980's (Forensic Psychology Practice, 1999). One of the key assumptions in the model, is that those exposed to extreme pornography as children, or who were themselves subjected to CSA, will often go on to become adult abusers themselves (Brown, 2014). The roots of CSA are therefore perceived to be in the abnormal

childhood social experiences of the offender, leading childhood victims of sexual abuse to later assume the role of adult abuser (Finkelhor, 1984).

In the UK, Finkelhor (1994) estimated that 12% of adult women and 8% of adult men, had been abused as children, while the Crime Survey of England and Wales in 2015-16 revealed that prosecutions for CSA rose by 15.4%, and, for sending grossly offensive or indecent messages, by 32% (Laville, 2016). A caveat, however, is that these sexual crime increases may be due to better reporting rates, and the media's influence on people over historical sex abuse cases, like Jimmy Savile's and Cyril Smith's, rather than an actual increase in the quantum of offences (Davis, 2015; Danczuk, 2014). Nevertheless, these figures could possibly be interpreted as being fuelled by the growth of online pornography/SGI's.

Paedophilia and CSA are two separate entities, although it is certainly a truism that many CSA offenders are paedophiles, but conversely many paedophiles are not CSA offenders. Paedophilia is classified as a paraphilia, and usually accepted to be a fantasy (or real) sexual interest in pre-pubescent children under the age of thirteen (Psychology Today, 2015). In contrast, CSA is a legal definition of having sexual contact with children, under age eighteen in the UK. Certainly, some paedophiles will proceed to CSA in future, but 'thought crimes' are not illegal, unlike in Orwell's 1984 (1948). Looking online at sexual SGI's of children is a criminal act, as these are classified as IIOC's in the UK. This distinction between paedophilia and CSA is undoubtedly an emotive issue, particularly with ordinary members of the public, and is frequently inflamed by hyperbole infused media coverage in the tabloids. This contributed to the murder of Robert Daley aged forty-five, who was killed by two 15yo's (The Guardian, 2010); Daley had been accused of CSA, but the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had dropped the case, so the two teenage vigilantes decided to dispense their own arbitrary justice on the victim.

'Stranger-danger' is one of the smallest categories for the originator of a sexual-assault on a child. The N-JOV study of over 100,000 arrestees in the USA, found that 37% of 'child pornography' was produced by family members, 36% from acquaintances of the child-victim, only 5% from strangers, and 22% from online contacts (Stapleton, 2010). Other research into 6,000 victims of CSA discovered that 90% knew their abuser (Radford, et al., 2011). Indeed, public ignorance and misconceptions of the real nature, and origin of CSA are so extensive, that many are not aware that most 'paedophiles' are mislabelled hebephiles, who have a sexual interest in teenagers, rather than pre-pubescent children (Kershner, 2015).



Figure 10 SGI's & the issues of paedophilia, CSA and ILoC's

Online child grooming is illegal in the UK under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which characterizes it as communicating with a child at least twice, and then either meeting or travelling to a pre-arranged place to meet that child, to commit an offence (CPS, 2007). Online grooming may very well involve the mutual exchange of ILoC/SGI's.

These images may have been harvested without permission from children's SNS's, or alternatively obtained through deception, blackmail or sextortion. A minority of children may have sent such images of themselves, in full knowledge of who was receiving them. In 2012, there were 1,145 online grooming case referrals to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) (NSPCC, 2015).

Germany calling: Project Dunkelfeld & the 'Don't Offend' initiative

Ground-breaking research, which challenges Finkelhor's philosophies on the aetiology of CSA, is being currently conducted in Germany, known as 'Project Dunkelfeld'. The aim is to reach out to the large hidden group of paedophiles (hence Project Dark Field), who have not yet transgressed into CSA, to provide them with counselling to ensure that they never do so. This constitutes prevention rather than post-crime interception (The Nature of Paedophilia, 2014). It is based on Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans, which found that the brains of sixty paedophiles were no different to those of sixty others in a control group. However, there was a large difference between those paedophiles who had not offended, and those who had carried out acts of CSA. The aim of the project is to reduce the shame and stigma of paedophilia, and encourage men to come forward to get residential therapeutic counselling to prevent them from ever committing a contact, or non-contact, offence, such as viewing IloC's/SGI's online (Quayle & Sinclair, 2012). This is a pragmatic public health response to the issue of paedophilia and CSA, which puts the emphasis on prevention, rather than reacting to the offence once it has taken place. It centres on the contested conception that there can be no shame in an inherited 'hard-wired' sexual attraction in the brain, a disputed theory advanced by biological-determinists; but that this intervention needs to be targeted and dispensed, to prevent paedophiles from executing their desires (The Paedophile Next Door, 2014). In Germany, this is facilitated by the fact that therapists are forbidden from reporting to the authorities,

what their patients divulge to them in counselling sessions; unlike in the UK, where they have a legal duty to report any 'safeguarding' concerns regarding at risk children (dont-offend.org, 2015). With the Project Dunkelfeld/Don't Offend initiatives therefore, paedophiles are encouraged to come forward confidentially and seek therapy before they offend, whereas in the UK they remain concealed (The Nature of Paedophilia, 2014).

The 'Virtuous Paedophile'?

In England and Wales, grooming offences have risen from 186, in April 2004-March 2005, to 1,073, in April 2015-March 2016 (ons). The German public health approach embodied in the Project Dunkelfeld/Don't Offend schemes may offer some counterweight to this increasing problem. Ironically, the very same internet which makes illegal SGI's and IIoC's more available to those who seek them, also offers hope and support to some paedophiles in their struggle to avert becoming offenders in CSA/IIoC's. Self-defined 'virtuous paedophiles' have created their own support website, with an anonymous web forum of over 900 members including women (www.virped.org, 2015). They also seek to change public perceptions on the topic of virtuous paedophiles:

"I wish with all my soul that I could have a brain that's wired normally. I know that I can never act on what I feel, but I need to speak to a therapist...But if I talk to a therapist he could report me... I think about suicide a lot" (www.virped.org, 2015).

The German approach may be starting to migrate across the North Sea, and influence the way the matter is policed in the UK. Since the autumn of 2014, CEOP have implemented a new policy towards non-contact offenders, with IIoC's. Of 50,000 people on the police data base who commit these offences, approximately 16%-50% will go on to become contact CSA offenders (Ramesh, 2014). Therefore, the police's

priority has switched to catching currently active contact offenders, rather than spending their limited time, finances, and deploying expert staff on those who may never go on to commit a contact CSA, but who restrict themselves to viewing IIoC's, as non-contact criminals. Simon Bailey, chief constable of Norfolk police, explained the rationale behind the new approach:

'We have to think about an alternative solution. We need to engage with service providers from mental health and the health service to work with us to say these people need help' (cited in Ramesh, 2014).

However, this policing policy initiative is hugely controversial, with critics decrying the move as the de facto decriminalisation of non-contact CSA. This acute debate has perhaps taken on even greater importance since the recent findings of a further large scale German social survey by Dombert were published, which found that 2.4% of adult males in their sample of N8,718, admitted to having 'consumed' CSA images (Jütte, 2016). If Dombert's data are correct, this would equate to 500,000 men in the UK, a staggering ten-fold increase on the previous estimate of those who view IIoC's, from 2013 (Ramesh, 2014).

SGL's role in cyber-bullying & trolling

Research in Ireland (O'Moore, 2012), found that in a sample of just over 3,000 12-16yo's, 13.9% admitted to having been cyber-bullied in the last couple of months, while a further 8.6% confessed to cyber-bullying another. Offline bullying seems to be more extensive, with research findings showing the following: in England, a major survey of 28,000 children up to age seventeen, found that 38% had been hit by a classmate in the last month (The Children's Society, 2015). A telephone poll of 1,500 UK children (7-18's) found that 49% had been bullied, predominantly at school (PressAssociation, 2015). Focus group research by Bryce and Fraser (2013), on N108 9-

1990's, led them to assert that online and offline bullying had some different characteristics, but that children's perceptions of cyber-bullying were that it had become a largely normalised part of their online experiences. The most common forms of cyber-bullying included receiving distressing comments and name calling. Such findings suggest a far greater parity between children's perceptions of cyber-bullying, and offline bullying.

Cyber-bullying and trolling is a growing problem for children, as evidenced by recently released findings from a study by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC, 2016), which reported that its Childline service had received 88% more calls from children about online bullying, between 2011-12 (2,410), and 2015-16 (4,541). The rise of the internet and the connectivity of mobile devices are the leading technological developments which have facilitated both activities (Kowalski, et al., 2008). The anonymity available to those who indulge in online bullying/trolling has encouraged this behaviour as perpetrators, using avatars, need never meet their victims personally, or reveal their identity. In face-to-face bullying, an offender needs to have some confidence in their own physical power, in case the victim retaliates against them with violence; whereas with cyber-bullying, even the most pusillanimous tormentor can deliver malicious and deeply wounding digital assaults, *carte-blanche*. The gravest cases are those of cyber-bullies putting the personal information of their victims on illegal websites, where those looking to carry out non-contact CSA are lurking (Aftab cited in Kowalski, 2008). Although online bullying rarely involves physical violence, targets are made to feel constantly unsafe through psychological warfare techniques such as: issuing threats, intimidation, harassment, making derisory comments and insults, etc. (Shariff, 2008).

SGL's are very amenable to criminal abuse by cyber-bullies. If an intimate image has been obtained, either through illicit harvesting of photographs from SNS/image apps, or by blackmail, sextortion or deception, the perpetrator can then exploit it in their campaign of harassment and intimidation upon the victim.



Figure 11 How SGL's help facilitate cyber-bullying & cyber-trolling

Amanda Todd

The most notorious case of cyber-bullying, crucially involving SGL's, was that of Amanda Todd, the Canadian 15yo, who committed suicide by hanging herself in 2012, after posting an eight-minute long video on YouTube in which she made a silent plea for help to end her ordeal by slowly revealing placards, set to music, emulating Bob Dylan's famous 'Don't Look Back' music video. The post can still be seen on YouTube,

where it has had nearly twenty million views⁶ (Todd, 2012). An online male contact had persuaded her to flash her breasts on webcam, and when she refused to give him more explicit images, he proceeded to blackmail her to '*put on a show*'. He then carried out a threat to post the image of her naked breasts on Facebook, and sent the link to it to her family and friends (Marie, 2012). Subsequently, she was both cyber and physically bullied by her school peers, was forced to move school where the bullying followed her, then abused drugs and alcohol and finally hanged herself (Wolf, 2012). In 2014, a 35yo male suspect was arrested in the Netherlands, following an international police operation, for releasing the images and making the sextortion threats, and for similar blackmail attempts on other girls in the US and UK (AP Vancouver, 2014). Coincidentally, one of the SOECA officers interviewed during the Stage 2 fieldwork for this thesis, was heavily involved in the investigation that led to the suspect's arrest.

For adults, cyber-trolling aimed at teachers has been a significant problem, on websites like 'Ratemyteachers.com' (2015), which allow students to anonymously grade their current and former teachers and to write sometimes disparaging, or libellous comments. Online trolling is undergoing explosive growth in the UK, with figures from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) showing that in 2014, five people a day were convicted of online trolling. Convictions have increased tenfold since 2004, using laws that pre-existed the 2015 Criminal Justice and Courts Act, naming trolling as a specific offence (The Telegraph, 2015).

The psychological damage that a victim of cyber-bullying endures is potentially much greater than its physical analogue, as there is a vast audience for the digital assault, able to behold the abusive proceedings voyeuristically (Shariff, 2008). Approximately 80% of children do not report cyber-bullying because they think the situation will

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ej7afkypUsc>

either get worse, or remain unaltered, if they do; the psychological trauma for its victims often has no cessation (Nicol, 2012).

The extent of SGI's in cyber-bullying/trolling, remains undiscovered, but many images are illicitly harvested from people whose digital security on their SNS's is weak, allowing strangers to steal self-posted intimate or embarrassing photographs. These can either be published directly, as occurred with Amanda Todd, or digitally altered with graphics software like 'Photoshop', to carry out cyber-bullying attacks. Sexist and homophobic cyber-bullying/trolling are real problems too, as the recent case of Stella Creasy MP exemplifies; she campaigned for the eighteenth-century author Jane Austen, to feature on the next revised £10 Bank of England banknote, as none of the reverse sides had a woman on them at that point. Her Twitter account was consequently bombarded by online trolls, one of whom threatened to rape her. The troll was sentenced to eighteen weeks' imprisonment for sending a message that was grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character (Williams, 2014). SNS's and messaging apps have empowered a legion of miscreant misanthropes: the bored, the anti-social and the insecure, to inflict significant distress by online trolling their victims (Wright, 2012).

Reddit

The discussion website 'Reddit', provides a pertinent example of online trolling. Although it has only 164 million active monthly users (AMU's), relative to Facebook's 1.49 billion (Tarmey, 2015). Nevertheless, Reddit has an online punch far greater than its weight, as its stories, debates, discussions, photographs, memes and videos are often recycled, or 'mined', by other SNS users, and then reposted elsewhere, so achieving very high visibility levels. Indeed, Reddit has been accorded the sobriquet of 'the front page of the internet', and it is possibly the paramount website for hosting global web forums on virtually every topic. Reddit works by allowing discussion

forums to form, known as 'subreddits', which are run and moderated by their own members. Predominantly, most such forums concern mundane and banal things like sport, or celebrities; however, under the guise of free speech, many unpleasant, borderline illegal, politically extreme, and morally reprehensible forums exist. When Reddit's chief executive recently attempted to gain some editorial control over these subreddits, she was viciously trolled, receiving death-threats from some of the groups' moderators and members, and then forced to resign. The nature of these less than salubrious forums on Reddit can be ascertained from their names: 'watchpeopledie, rapingwomen, coontown, PhilosophyofRape, cutefemalecorpses, beatingwomen' and 'PicsofDeadKids', etc. (Thielman, 2015). The Reddit trolls justified their actions as defending their right of free speech to discuss and share images (including some SGI's), about topics such as: necrophilia, CSA, White-Supremacism, neo-Nazism, rape and physical violence against women, etc. Several of these subreddits were subsequently taken down, but many are still operational. The concept of online free speech is certainly tested to the limit by the opinions of some members of these subreddits. Moreover, the trolling counter-reaction to Reddit's efforts to curtail some of the more immoral forums, shows how the issues of online free speech, and cyber-trolling, can come together to fabricate a venomous alloy.

Cyber-hacking & SGI's

Cyber-hacking can run the gamut from secret government sponsored hacking of rival states' military, technological, and industrial secrets, to organised-crime gangs, intent on stealing money through credit card (CC) fraud; to organized groups (or individuals) carrying out political or moral attacks on corporations and companies they disapprove of; even including mischievous pranksters intent on provoking some jocular anarchy; and finally the hacking of private online Cloud accounts, or SNS's, and stealing any SGI's, found there (Mansfield-Devine, Sept. 2014).

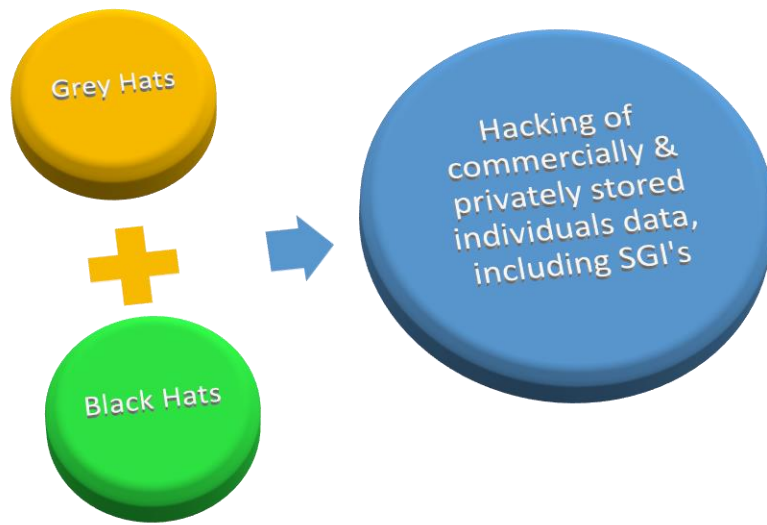


Figure 12 Hacking & SGI's

Black Hats Vs Grey Hats

Before proceeding with an exploration of civilian rather than governmental hacking, it is necessary to understand the terminology of hackers who fall into the categories of 'Black Hats' and 'Grey Hats'. The Blacks are usually associated with criminal activities such as corporate extortion, malicious or humorous/prank attacks, disruption, or scoring political points, often free speech related. Whereas, the Greys are often known as ethical hackers, people who work for companies trying to defend against cyber-attacks, or individuals and collectives who probe for weaknesses and then bring this to the attention of the website host, so that they can fix the problem (Harris, et al., 2008). This process is also known as 'Penetration Testing', as cyber security is attacked to examine its robustness (Engebretson, 2013). A topical example of Black Hat hacking would be the recent UK TalkTalk hack, in which the bank account details of 20,000 customers were stolen, a small element of the enormous figure of 600,000 thefts of personal data details a year, from websites in the UK (Khonami, 2015; Hern, 2015). The issue of Black Hat hacking remains topical, as Yahoo

has just belatedly confessed to being the victim of the biggest commercial hack of all time, when a billion customers' account details, were stolen in 2013 (Goel & Perlroth, 2016); the largest UK consumer bank hack ever has also recently occurred - the 'Great Tesco Bank Heist' - where 9,000 current account holders had a total of £2.5 million raided by cyber-hackers (Treanor, 2016).

SGL's do feature in some of these Black Hat hacking attacks, as individuals can find their intimate, private pictures and details suddenly released for all to gawk at on the internet, as for example in the Apple iCloud hack, a.k.a. Celebgate, in which some 200 celebrities had their amateur-porn pictures released online. The hack cracked insecure passwords for personal items stored on the Apple iCloud, via people's iPhones (Naughton, 2014). Another example is the 'Ashley Madison' hack, a website which facilitates married people surreptitiously meeting other sexual partners (Badham, 2015). Ashley Madison claimed to have a worldwide membership of over thirty-seven million, and operates under the motto '*Life is short. Have an affair*' (ashleymadison.com, 2015). The hacking group involved was the 'Impact Team', and their demand was for the website to close immediately, or face the leaking of members' account details and SGL's harvested illicitly from the site. The issue which infuriated the Impact Team hackers was the fact the website's owner was charging exiting customers £15 each, to fully delete all their details from their system, but clandestinely retaining their CC information (Hern, 2015). The hackers subsequently released 9.7GB of stolen data, from 177 million members (the site was one of many in an online suite) in 2014, on the Dark Web (Reuters/Toronto, 2015; Doward, 2015). Some adulterous celebrities were outed by the hack. Furthermore, Canadian police were investigating two suicides of members exposed by the Ashley Madison hack (Thielman, 2015).

The hacking issue's contemporary importance in the UK can be seen from the fact that the government recently announced the spending of £1.9 billion to combat the threat, including the creation of the just opened National Cyber Security Centre, embedded within GCHQ (Davis, 2016).

In the US, President Donald Trump raised cyber issues many times whilst campaigning, and promised a four-part cyber-security strategy to deal with the threat, comprised of: a massive audit of all federal agencies; more cyber-police; improvement in the country's cyber-command; and development of better cyber-weapons (Pagliery, 2016; Wheelwright, 2016). However, Trump strenuously rejected the findings of the CIA that Putin's Russia had hacked the Democratic National Convention (DNC) to attempt to influence the outcome of his presidential election (Johnson & Kelly, 2016).

Regarding SGI's, potential damage from Black Hat hacking is evident, particularly for marital cheats, including several celebrities, who are the highest profile victims of the Celebgate and Ashley Madison hacks (Naughton, 2014; Badham, 2015).

Cyber-sexortion & SGI's

Sextortion, or cyber-blackmail, is increasingly becoming a problem as SGI's become more common online, usually harvested from targets' SNS accounts, but also sometimes duplicitously extracted from the victims themselves. The online blackmail usually entails two separate goals on behalf of the perpetrator, either to coerce the victim to send even more intimate SGI's of themselves, or alternatively, to demand money by menacing the publication of the SGI's that the extortionist had previously acquired. The consequences can be extremely traumatic for those on the receiving end of sextortion, often leading to mental health problems and even suicide, as in the case of Amanda Todd. Scottish teenager, Daniel Perry, killed himself by throwing himself from a bridge in 2014, after being tricked by a Filipino sextortion gang into sending

them SGI's of himself. Gang members posed as beautiful young girls, to inveigle the SGI's out of Daniel, before then threatening to release them online to his family and friends unless £1,100 was paid to them. Fifty-eight members of the gang were arrested in May 2014, and were found to have hundreds of active simultaneous sextortion cases running, on an almost industrial scale worldwide (Edmonds, 2014).

Sextortion is a growing problem in the UK. The National Crime Agency (NCA), has reported an increase of webcam blackmail incidents from nine, in 2011, to 385 in 2015, and 864 up to mid-December 2016 (Topping). There have been four reported UK suicides in the year to December 2016, due to cyber-sex extortion, with the greatest group of online blackmail victims being males, aged eleven-to-twenty. One of them was Ronan Hughes, aged seventeen, from Northern Ireland, who was tricked by a gang of cyber-sex extortionists into sending them intimate SGI's of himself. They then proceeded to blackmail him for £3,000, to prevent the release of the images on his Facebook account/contacts. The crime is a massively unreported one, due to the shame and embarrassment of the victims (Ibid).

Sexting, SGI's & cyber-crime

The criminal abuse of SGI's during sextortion attempts often results from sexting which commences as a 'private' matter between two individuals, but may spiral out of control into abuse, bullying and sextortion. US research recorded that 4% of 12-17yo's had sent nude or semi-nude images of themselves, and a further 15% had received such images of others; while in the UK, 27% of young people reported that sexting happens regularly, or continuously (Stone, 2009). A figure of 7.8% of 948 UK children (11-16yo's), admitted they had either physically shown, or sent online, a naked or semi-naked SGI of themselves to another person (Martellozzo, et al., 2016). In the US, 'Kids Safe', a national educational campaign was launched in 2014, to raise

awareness among schoolchildren about how sexting can lead to cyber-bullying and sextortion (JOENG, 2014).

The SGI's that sexters anticipated were going to remain private, often do not remain so, and once 'out there' online, the photographs are likely to survive forever (Guerry, 2012). The UK's Internet Watch Foundation (2015) charity, has conducted research showing that 88% of all SGI's of children are copied (harvested) from the sites they were originally posted-on, e.g. WhatsApp, and then re-posted elsewhere. Also, 'McAfee' conducted research and discovered that 60% of all 'private' sexts, end up leaked beyond this original recipient, sometimes seen by entire cohorts of their friends and school/work colleagues (Bowlin, 2013).

One possible way to combat the criminal misuse of SGI's, is the 'right to be forgotten', upheld in the European Court of Justice in May 2014, and which forced Google to consider requests to have links removed from its search engine results, and erase data that:

'appear to be inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant or excessive...in the light of the time that had elapsed' (Travis & Arthur, 2014).

Unfortunately, the ruling is hamstrung by the fact that it only applies to European Union (EU) countries, so all the links and data remain intact on Google, beyond the EU's jurisdiction. Furthermore, post-Brexit, many EU laws and regulations may be abandoned in two-three years' time in the UK, anyway.

The sexting of SGI's has spawned a host of criminal abuses: i.e. sextortion, cyber-blackmail, cyber-bullying/trolling, cyber-hacking, revenge porn, child grooming, and IIoC's by online 'non-virtuous' paedophiles.

The legal response to Child-sexters

How does society deal with children who send sexts that contain SGI's of themselves, to their sexual partners, also often children, or when they forward such material on to third parties? Do we criminalise tens of thousands of young people who are making, distributing, viewing and downloading SGI's/IloC's? Undoubtedly, the intentions of the great majority of these callow 'offenders', was to indulge in nothing more harmful than some 'flirty fun' (Shariff, 2015). It is paradoxical in the extreme that laws passed to protect children from being the victims of CSA, and the creation and distribution of such images online, are potentially criminalising the very group they are supposed to be protecting. Most children who create and send such images probably do so within a youthful, and trusting, relationship. To prosecute them under laws intended to deter adult CSA offenders and non-contact online peddlers of IloC's, seems a crass inequity (Hasinoff, 2015). In the UK, images of CSA are illegal under the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and anyone convicted of the offence, including a child, can face incarceration and being placed on the Sex Offenders Register for a period commensurate with mandated sentencing; although a youth under eighteen would usually get a shorter period. However, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), replaced in 2015 by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), and in cooperation with CEOP, produced a statement that children who are first time offenders will not normally be prosecuted for the offence, especially when it involves SGI's sent consensually between teenage intimates (Perry, 2014). Instead, children in this situation will be investigated to ensure their personal safety, and issued warnings or reprimands about their future conduct.

The law on child-sexters, must be amended and updated, so that the ACPO stance is given the force of statute law, rather than prosecution being left to the interpretation of the CPS, or local officers, on a case by case basis.

The role of SGI's in revenge porn

Revenge porn is constructed around the SGI's that women, mostly, had voluntarily made with their previous relationship partner before splitting with them: US research revealed that 90% of revenge porn victims were female (Webb, 2014). Revenge porn is one strand of non-consensual online pornography, but it has different characteristics from other SGI related cyber-crimes, i.e.: stealing images from SNS's without the owners' consent, extorting material via sextortion, tricking the unwary online user via duplicity, hacking the internet Cloud accounts where targets have stored selfies, and even covert sexualised photography, of a voyeuristic 'peeping tom' nature (Citron & Franks, 2014).

Revenge porn became a named criminal offence in England and Wales in February 2015, under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act, although earlier laws were in place to prosecute offenders who had previously committed it; specifically, the Communications Act 2003, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (parliament.co.uk, 2015; gov.co.uk, 2014). A person found guilty, under the most recent 2015 law, of conducting an act of revenge porn, now faces incarceration for up to two years (russellwebster.com, 2015). There were 206 prosecutions for 'disclosing private sexual images' in England and Wales, from April 2015-March 2016, the first full year of the law's existence (Laville, 2016). Additionally, between April and December 2015, a total of 1,160 cases were reported to the police in England and Wales, including three eleven-year old victims, with 61% of them resulting in no further action being taken (Townsend, 2016).



Figure 13 The role of SGI's in revenge porn

In research by Webb (2014), 93% of revenge porn victims admitted to having suffered significant emotional distress, and 49% reported that they had subsequently been either stalked or harassed by online users who had viewed the images. This can occur because the perpetrators often publish the personal details of their target, alongside the SGI's: i.e. home address in 16% of cases, home telephone number in 20%, email address in 26%, and the full name of the person pictured, in 50% etc. Such non-consensual pornography is sometimes the product of an ongoing catalogue of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA), in which principally the male offender had coerced (physically, mentally or emotionally), their female sexual partner, into obedience (Citron & Franks, 2014). The terror that victims experience, of intimate SGI's

being released online, keeps many female partners domestically enfeathered by an abusive male sexual partner. Franklin (2014), has contended that revenge porn should be reclassified as 'cyber-rape', as the motivations of online offenders are akin to emulating a physical rape.

The 2015 law⁷ is inadequate however, as it only criminalises the act of uploading images classed as revenge porn, and not hosting them on a website, or viewing them. This shortcoming, and the US domicile of revenge porn websites like 'MyEx.com' and 'TheDirty.com', has emasculated UK efforts to significantly reduce the extent of the problem. The tags given to uploaded non-consensual SGI's, from embittered male ex-lovers on those two US revenge porn websites reveal much about their nature: '*Cockslut; Bitch got herpes; Slut who likes to give it up; Dirty slutty Jehovah Witness; slippery cunt; just a hoe*', and '*psychotic lying whore*'. A vigorous user base of online trolls makes vitriolic comments about the non-consensual images posted on such sites, some using the personal ID's of the women, to commence cyber-bullying/trolling the victims, and even cyber-stalking them (Revenge Porn, 2015).

Also in 2015, the MoJ in the UK, launched a public awareness campaign highlighting the dangers of revenge porn (revengepornhelpline.org.uk, 2016). The publicity campaign runs under the tag '*Be aware B4 you share*', with a range of online resources and simultaneous Facebook/Twitter campaigns to spread awareness, using the hashtag '#NoToRevengePorn'.

Although predominantly conducted by men, the first woman to be jailed in the UK for the offence of revenge porn, was Samantha Watt, aged thirty-one, who was sentenced to eighteen weeks' incarceration, for posting intimate pictures of her lesbian ex-lover on Facebook, along with accusations that she was a prostitute and paedophile (Cockroft, 2015).

⁷ Under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act, for England and Wales, 2015.

There are an estimated three-thousand websites worldwide devoted to publishing revenge porn SGI's (Citron & Franks, 2014); and the original revenge porn website in the US, 'Is Anyone Up?', grossed \$20,000 a month in revenues at its height (Franklin, 2014); with an estimated 150,000-240,000 website visitors a day, before being sold to an anti-bullying organization in 2012 (Strouda, 2014).

The revenge porn victim's future career can often be ruined if their current or future employer sees the posted non-consensual intimate images. Around half of employers covertly screen job applicants' SNS sites, and some 9% of jobseekers were rejected due to their self-publication of 'racy photographs', revealed one study (The Telegraph, 2010). Current employees also risk dismissal, as a direct consequence of their intimate images appearing on revenge porn websites.

SGI's & international organized cyber-crime gangs

The total worldwide revenues of all forms of cyber-crime have been estimated at a colossal £600 billion, and therefore the profits for criminal enterprises in just one sector, the buying and selling of SGI's/IIOC's, are likely to be enormous (Walker-Osborn & Price, 2011).

Such abusive SGI's/IIOC's have been accorded a dual taxonomy by Wolak and Finkelhor (2011): 'Aggravated' and 'Experimental'. Aggravated SGI's represent images recorded and uploaded by perpetrators intent on committing a crime, and either making money, or doing harm to their subject; whereas Experimental SGI's have a more naive and innocent source, stemming from the consensual exchange of images (sexting) between teenage sexual partners, or those voluntarily indulging in online sexual exhibitionism or experimentation. Both types can end up in the hands of criminal gangs, and are then disbursed to those who seek to purchase and view images of CSA/IIOC's. The purveyors of these illegal SGI images of children are often

now based in Eastern Europe, ever since the taking down of the infamous CSA image swapping website, 'W0nderland' in 1998, and the Texan company 'Landslide Productions' in 1999, which contained a portal to purchase CSA images (Taylor, 2011). The Landslide bust, led to 'Operation Ore' in the UK, where police tracked down thousands of customers by their use of CC's to purchase images, although this led to many false arrests, of people who had only purchased legal adult pornography from the site (Campell, 2005).

From Russia without love

The media frenzy surrounding the W0nderland/Landslide raids certainly deterred many potential offenders from executing their premeditated crimes; but it also made those intending upon making, publishing, or viewing/downloading IloC's, highly reluctant to engage with any western website which the police could raid. This led to an exodus of such websites beyond the judicial frontier of western police forces. Russia creates many enticements for organised cyber-crime to base itself there, partly due to President Putin's nationalistic, anti-western policies. It also had the largest number of online users in Europe in 2014, with 81.47 million, as compared to Germany, second, with 71.72 million, and the UK, third, with 57.26 million. Russia's population also has a vigorous and vibrant SNS media engagement rate, and it possesses a modern digital infrastructure that can easily be exploited by online organized crime (Judah, 2013; internetworldstats.com, 2014; Worldometers, 2015). It is also freely open to the internet, unlike China, which blocks online access via 'The Great Fire Wall of China' (Alford, 2011). Behind this, China's 602 million internet users in 2014, were all locked within their own state-censored, insular cyber eco-system (Jacobs, 2010; internetlivestats.com, 2015), a situation described as '*networked authoritarianism*' (MacKinnon, 2011, p. 32).

Putin's Russia increasingly finds itself at loggerheads with the west over issues such as the annexation of the Crimean peninsula; fomenting civil war in the eastern part of Ukraine; harassing internal political opponents; violating the human rights of LGBT Russians; using its energy supplies to blackmail neighbouring states into kowtowing to the Kremlin's will; supporting the dictator Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war, and even allegedly murdering exiled dissident Alexander Litvinenko, in London in 2006, by lacing his tea with the deadly radioactive isotope, Polonium 210 (Lucas, 2009; Guriev, 2015; Judah, 2013; Lain, 2016). Therefore, acquiescing to western governments' demands to deal with the many organized cyber-crime gangs within its borders is anathema to President Putin. Some of the more Slavic former Russian satellite states, in Eastern Europe, also provide congenial cyber-crime hosts (Everett, 2015).

The TOR browser

When the TOR browsers' encrypted secrecy and anonymity are added to this, organized cyber-crime is enjoying a golden age (Okrent, 2010). TOR allows users access to the Deep Web/Dark Net, which can be denominated as all the websites, and online areas, normally hidden from a search response executed in a conventional web-browser like Chrome etc. (Laden, 2014). Mostly, these are completely legitimate, such as banks' financial records, or commercial organizations' Human Resources (HR) details etc., but a minority are hidden for criminal purposes. Two of the main types of hidden online platforms are for the purchasing of illegal drugs, and the file sharing of IloC's. TOR has around three million online users and an estimated, 1,000-1,200 hidden sites. Research by Everett (2015), suggested that 80% of the visits to clandestine sites on TOR involved the trading of illegal CSA images.

TOR was developed by the US navy and released as free-ware, as a means of creating unbreakable encrypted military communications, an analogue super-enhanced Third Reich 'Enigma' machine, without any possibility of Alan Turing's Bletchley Park code-breakers being able to decipher its communications. The navy's philanthropy with TOR, unwittingly created a double-edged sword. TOR won the 2010 'Free Software Foundation's Award for Projects of Social Benefit', in recognition of the liberty it gives to whistle-blowers, human rights activists facing harassment, and political dissidents within authoritarian regimes (Bartlett, 2014; Judah, 2013). Conterminous with these undoubted benefits, TOR also affords organised cyber-crime the freedom to reach out from behind the new 'Digital Iron Curtain'; to disgorge with impunity a scourge of cyber plagues upon the online world, including: Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks⁸, computer viruses/worms, cyber-blackmail, trojans, malware, spyware, CC fraud, hacking, military/corporate espionage, fake medicines/designer goods, sexual slavery, and the sale of online IIOC's, many of an SGI derivation.

SGI's & the digital cryptocurrencies (Bitcoin etc.)

Cyber-criminals have also enthusiastically embraced 'Bitcoin', invented by 'Satoshi Nakamoto', a.k.a. Craig Wright, in 2009 (Safi, 2016). Bitcoin is the most widely known and used of the new digital cryptocurrencies, although there are more than two-dozen other lesser known variants: e.g. 'Stellar' and 'Dogecoin' etc. They have been rapidly corroding the mechanisms by which the police formerly used to investigate, arrest and convict website owners trading IIOC's (Taylor, 2011; cryptocoincharts, 2015). The digital cryptocurrencies could utterly neuter the power of the established central and commercial banks, in controlling money. People will be theoretically free to trade in

⁸ Where numerous private computers are surreptitiously hijacked, unbeknown to their owners, to bombard the victims' website with data requests, so that it crashes or slows due to the abnormally high volume of fake traffic.

digital cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, safe in the knowledge that both parties have the amount and value they claim, thereby eliminating commercial banks, and undermining their very *raison d'être*. This is because the cryptocurrencies are created by online, networked, anonymous and encrypted computers, outside the current banking system, that continuously update each other and verify transactions, and so are incorruptible.

The Blockchain

This revolutionary new system is known as the 'Blockchain' (Swan, 2015). By using the Blockchain, traders have eliminated the bank as a middleman so both trading parties see their profits rise, and financial fees wither away. Some writers hail the Blockchain as the next technological 'great leap forward', akin to the commencement of the Industrial Revolution itself (Ibid). Trade, business and personal freedom could all be enhanced by the Blockchain, which is why it looms so massively over all areas of online transactions, where any two parties exchange contracts; banks, and an array of business services (i.e. solicitors or accountants etc.), could all become superfluous (Harkness & Johnson, 2015). Not since the rise of the modern banking system with the Medici's in Renaissance Tuscany, has the financial/credit foundation of the modern world faced such a transformation and an existential threat (Parks, 2006).



Figure 14 International organised crime gangs & SGI abuse

The reverse side, of direct peer-to-peer (P2P) trading with a cryptocurrency, is that there is no financial trail of the transaction, so police investigating criminal purchases/sales, or money laundering, do not have any numeric records to examine anymore (Vigna & Casey, 2015). The Achilles heel of organized crime, 'money laundering', is about to be swept into Trotsky's '*dustbin of history*', by Bitcoin, etc. (Marcus, 1995). Other online cyber-criminal enterprises, are being galvanised by the cryptocurrencies too: illegal gambling; drug purchasing; trading online IloC's/SGI's; buying prohibited firearms; financial Ponzi schemes; illegal mining; and even, bizarrely, the booking of assassination attempts, for \$10,000 a 'shot' (Hurlburt & Bojanova, 2014). Bitcoin must not be underestimated, as the total value in circulation

was estimated to be \$14 billion at the latest count⁹, an all-time high, although they do fluctuate wildly (Conroy, 2016).

SGI's/IloC's are an important component of organized cyber-crime's profits, as Everett's (2015) research showed. The provenance of such SGI's, that end up with cyber-criminals are multifarious, including: images of offline CSA taken in domestic situations, and then published online; historical images dating back to the 'Super8' home movies; 'Polaroid' snaps, or videos from the 1970's and 1980's; images of CSA taken by adults in their line of work with children; and abusive images tricked, or coerced, out of online victims of sextortion. Also, SGI's are sometimes harvested from third party 'parasitic' websites by the cyber-criminals, and then proffered for sale. In a major piece of content analysis research, by the IWF (2015), findings revealed how the SGI's/IloC's of adolescents are now readily available online, on SNS's, providing easy pickings for cyber-gangs to harvest and then transplant onto their own parasitic websites for sale. The IWF research found a total of 3,803 SGI/IloC/CSA images, involving young people under the age of twenty, during three months of the study in 2014; 17.5% of the images had subjects who were 15yo or under, and 93.1% of these featured girls aged fifteen or under; 85.9% of the images featuring 15yo's and younger were created via a webcam, and finally, 89.9% of the 3,803 images, were located on third party parasitic websites, following illegal image-harvesting. Most shockingly, 286 of the 3,803 images contained a child of ten, or under. Only 8.5% were from mobile phones, and a negligible 1.8% were from digital cameras (Ibid). Until these findings, it was thought that most SGI's/IloC's were coming from mobiles and smartphones, so the webcam/laptop statistics proved to be a genuine revelation.

The use of Bitcoins to buy SGI/IloC's anonymously, on the TOR browser, from Eastern European domiciled websites, has weakened a new initiative launched in 2015 by the IWF, to try to attenuate this situation. They announced the creation of a 'Hash List',

⁹ Value on 23rd December 2016

which is a record of all known online CSA images in their database, including those on the UK police's Child Abuse Image Database (CAID). All the abusive images on the Hash List have been given a digital 'DNA fingerprint'; currently covering only still pictures, it certainly needs extending to moving images, as many SGI's featuring IIOC's are now movie clips. ISP's and SNS's, are now empowered to block the uploading of recognized online abusive images, previously given the digital DNA fingerprint by the IWF. They can also quickly excise existing ones *en masse*, by applying the digital codes from the IWF database. The Hash List, developed in partnership with Microsoft, which created the 'PhotoDNA' technology, is the first significant fruit of the '#WePROTECT Children Online' summit in London (IWF, 2015). However, the Hash List measure is enfeebled somewhat, as it only functions on 'seen' websites, accessed via standard web-browsers, and not on the hidden Dark Web sites, accessed through TOR.

Cyber-stalking & SGI's

Some consider cyber-stalking to be just a covert form of physical stalking, using the new tools furnished inherently by online access (Ménard & Pincus, 2012). The two types do share some important commonalities: most stalkers are men, most victims are women, and the highest category of stalker-offender is the jilted ex-sexual partner of the victim, seeking either retribution or reconciliation (Dreßing, et al., 2014).

The proximal stalker needs to be in the close geographical area of their victim to conduct their harassment campaign, which usually originates in a pathological obsession; research suggests around 50% of stalkers display some form of mental health issue. Nearness is essential for the proximal stalker, to corporeally intrude into the lives of their target, by repeatedly 'accidentally' encountering them, leaving them notes and gifts, or hanging around their homes and workplaces (Bocij, 2004; Barnes &

Short, 2015; Sheridan & Grant, 2007). Somatic links to the victim, and the pleasurable voyeurism of observing the target's reactions, provide one of the major dissonances between proximal and cyber-stalking. However, the social constraints on the cyber-stalker are unshackled, and opportunities massively augmented, by online anonymity (Ménard & Pincus, 2012). A telephone poll of 16,000 adults, found that 8% of women, and 2% of men had been stalked at some point in their lives, although only half had reported it to the police (Meloy, 2001). Further research from a self-selection survey of 1,261 people who had been stalked, revealed that 86.8% of victims were female (Sheridan & Grant, 2007). The UK acknowledged the problem when it passed its first anti-stalking law, the Protection from Harassment Act in 1997, and a subsequent strengthening with the Protection for Freedoms Act, 2012 (Meloy, 2001; cps, 2014). Cyber-stalking, unlike proximal stalking, can originate from any geographical location, and incorporates a wide variety of aspirations from the perpetrator, including: fraud, sextortion, blackmail, hacking, trolling and abuse etc. It is also implicated in the following criminal enterprises: attempts to humiliate and embarrass victims; identity theft; using a stolen identity to post inflammatory or vituperative messages; and finally, email harassment, by signing people up to be bombarded by spam emails and/or unwanted pornography (Bocij, 2004).

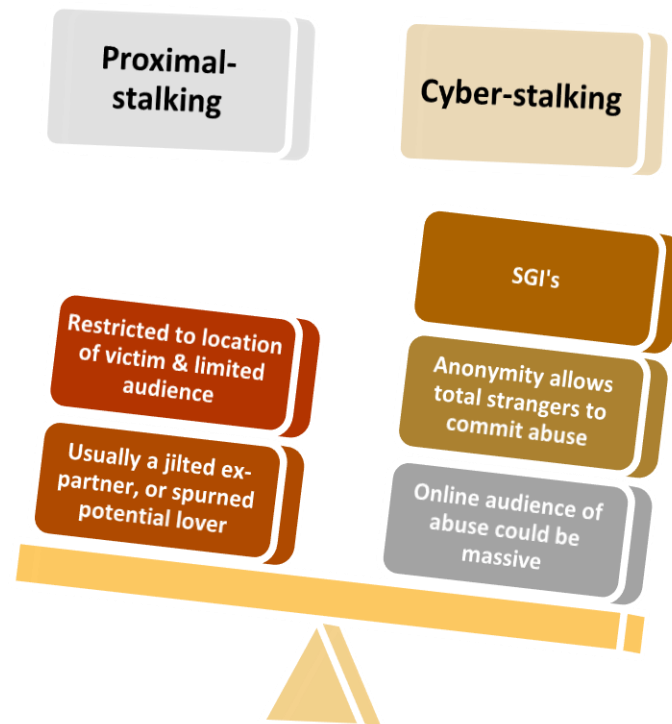


Figure 15 SGI's & cyber-stalking

Cyber-stalking in the UK

The stalking problem has become so intense in the UK, that the current Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, announced to the House of Commons in December 2016, an intention to bring into being 'stalking prevention orders', like Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's), which can be imposed by the courts on suspected stalkers, before any hard evidence to prosecute has been ascertained (Travis, 2016). This is to attempt to ameliorate the suffering of an estimated 1.5 million female victims, and 830,000 male ones every year, but which shrinks to only 4,168 recorded stalking incidents by the police, and which further resulted in a meagre 1,102 prosecutions in 2015-16. The National Stalking Helpline had responded to 3,550 calls to date, during most of 2016. Police have reported a 32% increase in stalking offences between 2015-16 (Ibid), and this is on top of the rise in stalking and harassment prosecutions by 20%, from 2012-13 to 2013-14 (cps, 2014).

A simple, but elegant, theoretical framework on the aetiology of stalking was supplied by Ménard & Pincus (2012), as three manifestations of Development Theory. Firstly, the 'Cycle of Violence', whereby children are brought up experiencing violence, and go on to become perpetrators themselves, as adult stalkers, akin to Finkelhor's (1984) analysis of the roots of CSA. Secondly, 'Attachment Theory', which speculates that an adult's attachment insecurities are shaped by the responsiveness, or absence of it, of the caregiver when the stalker was a child. And, thirdly, 'Pathological Narcissism', where stalking adults can develop narcissistic personality traits, if they experienced childhood trauma, or poor parental care (Ménard & Pincus, 2012).

Cyber-stalking and SGI's are symbiotically entwined, and can involve: the harvesting of SGI images, either by hacking the victims' private collection of intimate/sexual selfies, or pilfering them without consent from their weakly protected SNS profiles; gaining SGI's via sextortion or blackmail from the target; or, publishing non-consensual intimate images online (revenge porn) that they possessed because of previously being a sexual partner, or stalking a person whose picture they saw on such a site, alongside their personal details. They are all the SGI munitions, in the arsenal that cyber-stalkers deploy in their criminal harassment campaigns.

In response to the increasing threat, the UK government has just announced that it intends to double the maximum sentence that the courts can impose on those found guilty of stalking, from five to ten years¹⁰, as only 194 people were convicted of the offence in 2015, receiving custodial sentences averaging only 14.1 months each (Bowcott, 2017).

¹⁰ By putting an amendment into the Policing and Crime Bill, currently being debated in Parliament

SGL's & online romance frauds

The old-time 'Sweetheart Swindle' has received a significant boost by the progression of the online world. Before the growth of SNS's/messaging apps, conmen or 'grifters' had to trawl bars and clubs, to locate their next 'mark' (Rege, 2009). Now, they exploit the anonymity and proliferation of the internet to target victims, often working multiple marks simultaneously. Indeed, online romance frauds are often performed by organised criminal gangs, who network to keep the scams vibrant among their manifold global victims, caught in the gang's mendacious and elaborate, web of deception. The fraud is one of the most under-reported crimes, due to the reluctance of victims to report it to the police out of humiliation that they were hoodwinked by a scammer, who exploited their gullibility. The romance fraudster's avatar is frequently a handsome middle-aged man, often posing as a reliable and strong authority figure, such as an ex-army officer (Cohen, 2015).

SGL's are likely to play a prominent role in the activities of the online romantic scammer, as they are sometimes exchanged as sexts, once contact has been established via the victims SNS account/dating profile. The scammers use fake photos, and spend a typical six to eight months cultivating a rapport with their victim, slowly finagling the SGL's out of their target, as a prelude to the financial 'sting' (Rege, 2009). Once obtained, the chicanery can often degenerate into sextortion and cyber-blackmail, although the most common denouement of the swindle is an appeal to the victim to loan their online 'lover' escalating sums of money to pay for some emotionally affecting situation, such as an alleged ill relative's hospital bills, a failing business's costs, a pressing loan shark, or most frequently, to acquire the necessary travel funds needed for the journey to meet their online beau. Ingenious and sophisticated swindlers can cunningly draw their victim into the fraud using the 'Cycle of Lures', as the entanglement of the mark evolves slowly over many months (Rege, 2009). Once a large amount of money is obtained in escalating instalments, the scammer then absconds with the loot, never to be heard from again by the victim.

Online romance fraud in the UK

Whitty and Buchanan's (2012) research, estimated that 230,000 British citizens had been the victims of online romance fraud, with each victim losing between £50 and £800,000. Victims are left reeling by a debilitating triple-whammy, comprising: the financial losses, the breakdown of an online 'relationship', and finally, the mortification of falling for the swindle. In one tragic case, a mother and daughter committed suicide in 2015 in Scotland, after facing extortion attempts from a woman who was perpetrating a classic romance fraud on their son/brother. Lynsey Cotton, pleaded guilty to obtaining money by fraud from her 33yo male victim, and to threatening his mother and sister. She conned her mark out of nearly £5,000, a £2,000 diamond engagement ring, a Blackberry phone, and an iPhone (Gayle, 2015).

Conclusions

One of the recurrent themes in the findings of this inquiry into SGI's is the dual nature of the images under consideration. On the one hand, they can provide sexual stimulation, joy, entertainment, pleasure, and an easier means of seeking sexual partners. Yet, while the majority enjoy these many benefits, the minority face hazards including intense threats to their digital privacy and health, safety, and security.

The aim of this chapter was to set out the many ways in which online criminals can, and have, abused SGI's for their illicit aims. Such criminal exploitation has been discovered to encompass an overabundance of misapplications of the SGI's which both children and adults create, in their naivety, innocence, ignorance, inexperience or sheer recklessness.

The gamut of criminal abuses of SGI's are revealed by these findings to be legion, incorporating: cyber-trolling and bullying, sextortion, cyber-blackmail, cyber-hacking, revenge porn, cyber-stalking, use of SGI's/IloC's in the furtherance of online

child grooming, and even the online adaptation of the old-fashioned sweetheart scam. Many of these criminal abuses exploit the sexualized selfie, sent under the misapprehension that it was for the private viewing of only one trusted partner, or contact.

The issue of the nature of paedophilia itself was briefly discussed, because if the genetic/biological determinist thesis is correct, then the sexual attraction to children is 'hard-wired' into the brain, a socially abhorrent sexuality, rather than a proclivity to do evil; alternatively, it is perceived as a part of a cycle of abuse, that they themselves were victims of, earlier in their lives. The SGI/IloC origin of some of this abuse might be better controlled, if the highly controversial and still experimental German public health approach to non-offending paedophiles, gains traction. This would, however occur in the teeth of fierce resistance from many who work in the child protection sector.

Following the evaluation of the existing literature and research about SGI's, the thesis now moves to a discussion of the many issues surrounding the adoption of a mixed research method approach for the primary fieldwork, to obtain the answers to the research objectives of the study.

Chapter 5

Research Methodology

To aid the reader, the main research objectives of this inquiry can be reviewed once again in Chapter 1, on page 26.

Introduction

The mixed research methods used in this study were: an online, Stage 1, quantitative, anonymous survey; followed by Stage 2, which involved face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with five serving police officers at the SOECA command. Finally, five volunteer active SGI users from the online survey were selected for semi-structured interviews, by Skype.

The chapter contains several elements in its assessment of the adopted research strategy for the uncovering of the data required to achieve the study's SGI research goals. These include a reflective rationale for why mixed methods were deemed the most suitable strategy. This rationale encompasses many areas, such as an adoption of a pragmatic worldview in its approach to seeking knowledge on SGI's, and this theoretical stance is placed within the context of four rather abstract, but vital, underpinnings to the chosen strategy to investigate SGI's: ontological issues, epistemological ones, research paradigms, and the axiological background to the strategy.

The ethical foundations upon which this three-stage mixed research method strategy rests, are given significant attention to demonstrate that the primary research meets the highest standards expected for quality fieldwork.

This chapter also aims to evaluate the mixed strategy selected for achieving its SGI aims in terms of methodological triangulation, the Delphi Technique, and Grounded Theory, to see how each has exerted some influence in the overall choices of the mixed fieldwork types, and their implementations.

An assessment of the strengths and limitations of each of the three stages of research method is included, to justify why each was deemed the most appropriate for the attainment of the inquiry's SGI aims in preference to alternatives.

An account of the ways in which the data were analysed, from all three primary research stages, is also given, to afford the reader clarity about how findings were interpreted.

Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of the nature of the samples in the three fieldwork stages, looking at their compositions, constraints, and the assets that they brought to the quest to uncover necessary findings, to meet this SGI investigation's research objectives.

The pragmatic worldview

The reasons for a mixed research methods strategy, employed in this thesis, need explaining and defending. Quite simply, mixed methods provide the most pertinent possible approach to the exploration of knowledge around the subject of SGI's, which forms the core of this inquiry. However, this is not simply an exploratory exercise in knowledge acquisition, it is rather an analysis of such material through a wide-ranging plurality of theoretical lenses, to discuss several major social, political and economic issues of topical relevance. The quest for knowledge concerning SGI's, a relatively new, and rapidly developing, internet phenomenon, was only made possible following the proposals of British computer expert, Tim Berners-Lee in 1989, for a means for remote computers to communicate with each other.

The research is vital because, within only a generation, we have gone from the web's creation to the rise of internet pornography in the late 1990's, and now the arrival of SGI's in the last few years (Porter, 2014). Consequently, uncovering information on SGI's, about how, why, and the extent to which they are being used, is an important objective. Additionally, discovering whether SGI's benefit or damage individual participants, and furthermore, whether society itself is made better or worse by them, is of equal importance. One of the main reasons for conducting this research was to endeavour to shed some light on the existing lacuna surrounding SGI's. The interpretation of the answers to these research questions will often fundamentally depend on the prior theoretical perspectives that researchers and commentators bring to the subject. Such abstract theoretical views have included an evaluation of SGI's from a wide range of stances, including: Marxism, economics, various strands of feminism, structural functionalism, interpretative theory, libertarianism and cultural studies approaches.

Why were mixed methods deemed most suitable for the stated research objectives of this SGI study? The answer is that their use fits with the pragmatic worldview, i.e. that: *'There is a concern with applications – what works – and solutions to problems'* (Creswell, 2009, p. 10). For this study, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods is the most appropriate to fulfil both the exploratory goal of discovering knowledge about SGI usage, and investigating the weal or woe that this has caused individuals and society. While epistemological purists would object to this, the research needed, and utilised, both quantitative and qualitative methods, endorsing the concept that the two methods are not incompatible (Onwuegbuzie & Leach, 2005). This is because the quantitative online survey (Stage 1), revealed some metrics of the use, experience and diffusion of SGI's among a large group of online users; while the follow up, qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, among five SOECA officers (Stage 2), and five active SGI users (Stage 3), allowed both the richness and experience of their personal interactions with amateur online pornography to be brought forth, and new issues uncovered and further probed.

Furthermore, 'facts' (opening a whole new area that will be addressed shortly) from the initial quantitative survey were explored and checked, far more deeply in terms of individual human meanings and understandings, on the subsequent two qualitative stages of the research. The Delphi Technique was crucial in this process, and in exposing major gaps in findings about SGI's that needed addressing and rectifying in subsequent stages (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). In Stage 2 of the fieldwork, the five face-to-face, in-depth interviews with current MPS officers working at the SOECA unit, provided a critical understanding on the prevalence of the criminal abuse of IloC's in SGI's, findings that were largely missing from the Stage 1 survey data. These Stage 2 interviews helped inform the interview schedule for the Stage 3 Skype interviews with the five active SGI user volunteers from the online survey.

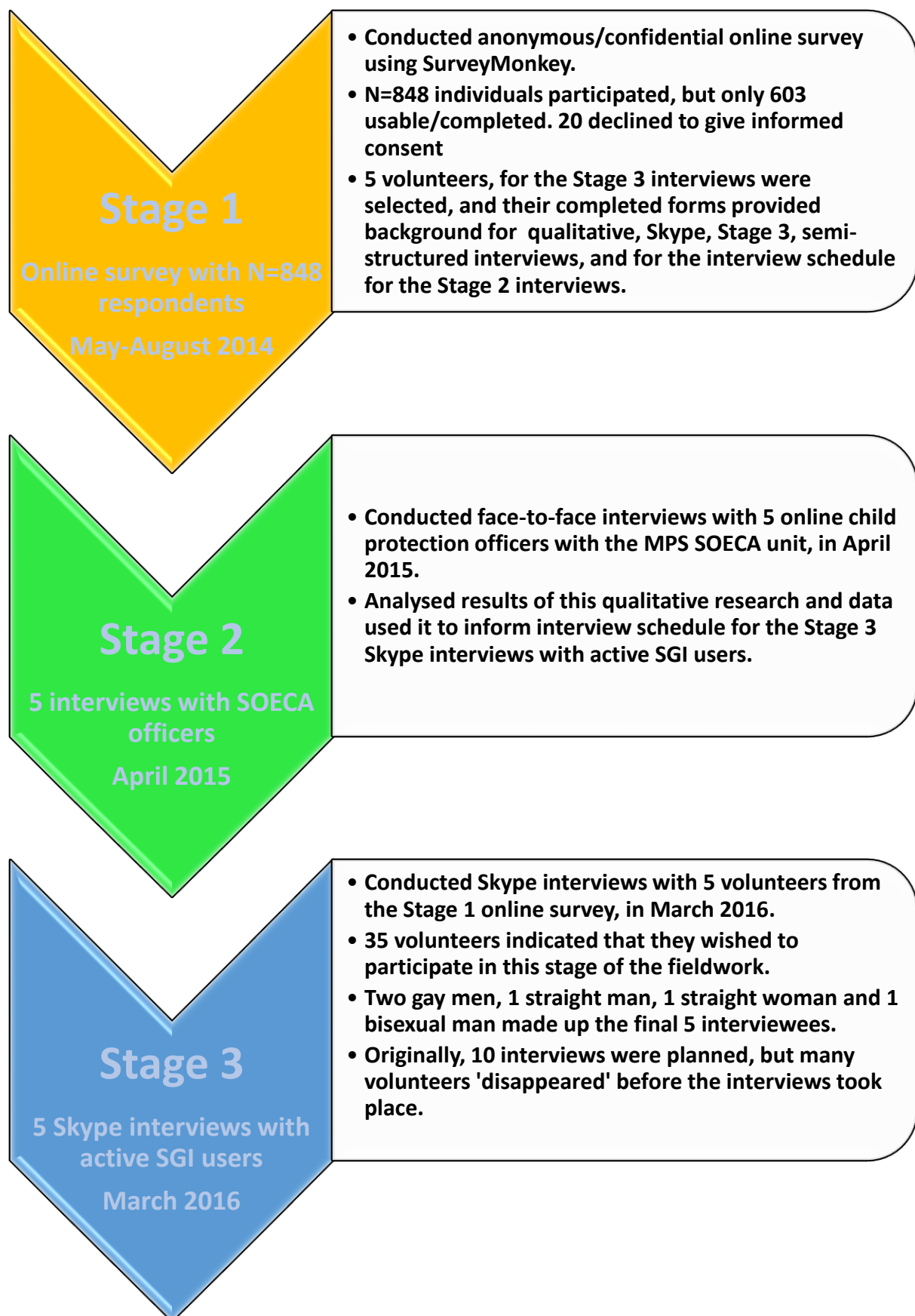


Figure 16 The three stages of fieldwork for this SGI study

The investigation adopts pragmatism, or 'what works best', for this research approach, and that is to combine two types of research method. Firstly, the initial online quantitative survey, in which measurements were taken of the use and spread of SGI's, and attitudes and viewpoints ascertained; followed up with five qualitative in-depth interviews from the SOECA officers in Stage 2, and five volunteers who had indicated on the initial survey that they were prepared to participate in the Stage 3 Skype interviews. The researcher strove to avoid over-emphasising the initial quantitative stage, at the expense of the latter qualitative phases, in an endeavour to maintain a balance between the two, in its mixed approach.

Creswell created a six-element categorisation for mixed research methods, and the one this research adopted is labelled the '*Sequential Explanatory Strategy*' (2009, p. 211). In this, the quantitative research goes first, and then the initial data collected is subsequently analysed in the second, qualitative research phase. So, for this study, the online quantitative survey was conducted and concluded before the latter, in-depth interviews took place, during Stages 2 and 3. The findings on the former strongly informed and influenced the areas to be probed on the latter stages. The symbiosis between the two was both '*confirmatory and exploratory*', attempting to determine both the extent and means of use, and respondents' attitudes towards the subject of SGI's, and to further explore any completely new, and unexpected, discoveries from Stage 1 (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 17). Existing theories were put to the test in the fieldwork analysis, and some new ones generated during this process, so utilizing both inductive and deductive research approaches, and employing elements of Grounded Theory, of which, more later.

Rationale for using mixed research methods

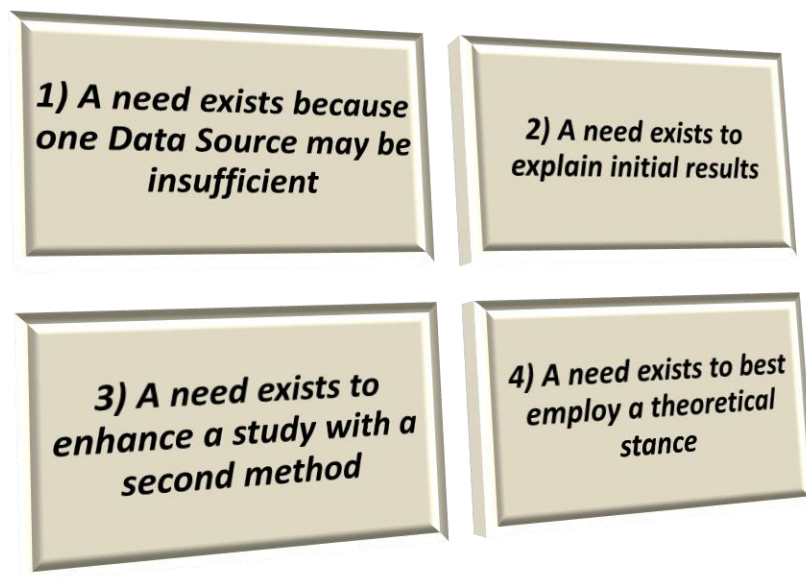


Figure 17 Rationale for using mixed research methods to investigate SGI's

1) 'A need exists because one Data Source may be insufficient' (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2011, pp. 5-6).

Quantitative data, in this investigation into SGI's, only allowed the researcher to acquire more factual, or attitudinal information, in areas already mainly pre-known to the investigator. However, the topic of SGI's is a rapidly growing one, and developing new features at an ultra-accelerated rate. To illustrate, in February 2014 Facebook announced the purchase of 'WhatsApp' the mobile messaging app, for a gargantuan \$19 billion dollars; the app had only been launched in 2009, and currently has one billion users worldwide (Rushe, 2014; Statista, 2016). One of the main purposes of this study was to assess the impact of new developments like these on SGI's, and not just to merely check on the progress of what was already known, *a priori*, by the academic research community. Furthermore, quantitative data would only be pertinent for the superficial measurements of users' personal characteristics and practices in their experiences with SGI's, such as how many times a week the

images were seen, etc. To gain a true insight and deeper penetration into what was going on, a more qualitative tool was necessary, to counter such constraints imposed by the survey (Bulmer, 1984). Only through probing the richness of the experiences of a research participant's engagements with SGI's, could a full picture emerge for the investigator, following the precedents of a more ethnographic approach to studying people, as laid out by 'Chicago School' founders, Park and Burgess (1969). Finally, the non-probability sample for the online survey meant that the quantitative data, on its own, could have been weakened in its impact due to overall data quality. Therefore, a second, alternative method, more humanistic in nature, was necessary to counteract this possible methodological weakness.

- 2) 'A need exists to explain initial results' (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2011, pp. 5-6).

The addition of comment boxes on some of the questions on the quantitative online survey did throw up the opportunity for some completely new knowledge to emerge, that was then further explored during the Stage 2 and 3 in-depth, semi-structured interviews of the fieldwork. Furthermore, in the survey, metrics concerning numbers using SGI's, their ages, genders and sexualities, and the different ways that they had either produced, or viewed SGI's, exposed numerous threads that needed further delving into and investigation through the adoption of more qualitative fieldwork approaches. The interview schedules for both these qualitative phases were crucially informed, and predominantly shaped by, the data gathered from the online survey.

- 3) 'A need exists to enhance a study with a second method' (Ibid).

Several issues all converged here to ensure that mixed methods were the most suitable fieldwork tool for this investigation into SGI's. Competing quantitative and qualitative approaches have been said to complement each other, with both bringing new material to the table, ensuring that a more valid research picture emerges during the presentation and interpretation/analysis of data generated. Correspondingly, the

two-rival quantitative/qualitative strategies have also been said to make up for their competitor's inherent weaknesses, in the process known as 'offsetting' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Finally, both quantitative and qualitative research methods in the pragmatic worldview had useful knowledge to interject, which enhanced the holistic nature of the findings of the finished SGI investigation.

4) 'A need exists to best employ a theoretical stance' (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2011, pp. 5-6).

The research objectives of this investigation stated that both theoretical and empirical evidence will be considered regarding the role and nature of SGI's. Various general theories, already extant, were scrutinized and analysed in all three stages of the fieldwork, following-on from being discussed during the previous literature review chapters of this thesis. The potential for proving and disproving the salience of these pre-existing theories when applied to SGI's, proved both intriguing and illuminating during the fieldwork; as did the discovery of new facts and theories, all revealed and analysed in the forthcoming results chapters, six-to-eight.

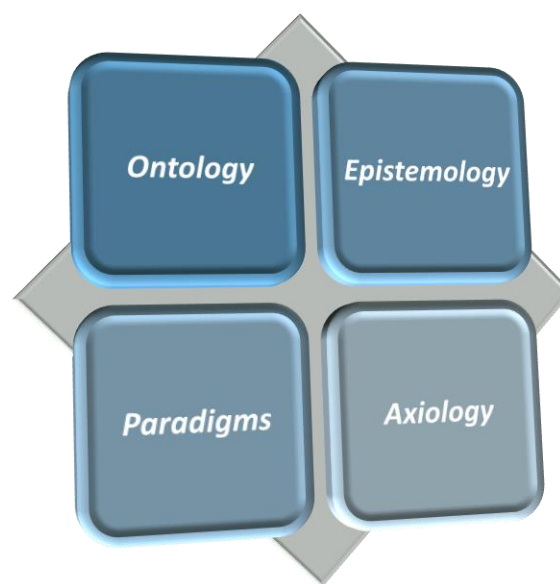


Figure 18 Four theoretical issues underpinning this SGI research methodology

Ontological issues

To investigate SGI's, the employment of both a quantitative online survey, then two different follow-ups sets of qualitative interviews, hurled this SGI research headlong into the highly contentious, and much disputed maelstroms of ontology, epistemology, paradigms and axiology, when conducting research. The research area under investigation (SGI's), risked becoming lost in this esoteric and abstract maze, somewhat akin to the 'Minotaur's Labyrinth'. With these dangers in mind, and ball of academic string firmly in hand, these theories have all been addressed for their significance to the mixed research method approach used in this study of SGI's.

For many social researchers, the mere act of choosing a quantitative survey or qualitative in-depth interviews, to conduct this inquiry into SGI's, nails one's ontological assumptions to the research mast. Thus, the choice of research method, for some commentators, automatically enrolls one in a view of what social 'reality' is like. Is social reality an external force that determines human behaviour, or rather, is it merely an influence that is, contrariwise, constructed by humans during their interactions? Such issues are:

'Referred to as ontological ones. They invite us to consider the nature of social phenomena – are they relatively inert and beyond our influence or are they very much a product of social interaction?' (Bryman, 2012, p. 6).

Merely having adopted mixed methods as the mode of investigation into SGI's, and thereby having used both quantitative approaches, and then qualitative research methods, guarantees opposition from adherents of the rival dualistic and dialectical view. They would contend that reality must consist of one of the alternate binary states - one thing or the other, objective or subjective, realist or relativist – and therefore will be hostile to this study's flexible, pragmatic and more ecumenical research strategy. In opposition to this, however, the main reason for using mixed methods to investigate SGI's is the pragmatic worldview: that valuable knowledge, insights and discoveries

were undoubtedly gained from deploying both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The two stances were used to both complement, and inform each other.

The employment of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, in a mixed methods research strategy, signals the total rejection of these monolithic, ontological, and bipolar extremities. Instead, the study is positioned with pragmatism ascendant, through the employment of all available instrumental research tools which were judged by the inquirer to be the most conducive to fully investigate SGI's, in pursuit of meeting the thesis's objectives.

Epistemological issues

Following on from the ontological issues regarding the research methods employed to study SGI's, the next logical step is a discussion of their position within the disputatious vortex of epistemology, and epistemological paradigms.

Even the use of the term 'paradigm' is fraught with intellectual ambiguity. Accordingly, Thomas Kuhn (1996) claimed that one reader had identified twenty-two distinct different uses for the term in his seminal book's first edition. He did endeavour to give a definitive meaning of a 'scientific paradigm' by stating:

'A paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm' (Kuhn, 1996, p. 176).

Assuming we can transpose this definition of a paradigm to the social research community, as many have endeavoured to, then we may have a workable definition to both analyse and apply.

An appreciation of epistemology is fundamental to understanding why quantitative and qualitative research methods were both used in the fieldwork for this SGI inquiry. This matter relates to issues of what counts as 'knowledge', and how does the social researcher come to 'know' what it is that they seek to understand? From this vital

source flows the choice of research methods embraced by those seeking truthful data, to accurately and reliably know things (Mertens & Bledsoe et al, 2010). Therefore, the choice of research method/s for all social researchers engaged in primary research, is indicative of what kind of knowledge they believe to be both valid and legitimate. Those who had selected only quantitative methods have been assumed to have believed that knowledge can only be gained by empirical (or what can be observed) approaches, while those who chose only qualitative approaches, might contrarily be assumed to have believed that knowledge is only to be gained through the interpretation of human behaviour, via the study of individuals' meanings, understandings and motivations. This, therefore, is why a comprehension of epistemological paradigms is imperative both for this inquiry into SGI's, and indeed for all social research. The pragmatic approach (Creswell, 2009), underpinning this thesis has rejected the stance that knowledge is either of one type or another, and that it must only be gleaned via the use of one research method, or another (quantitative Vs qualitative). Therefore, both methodological approaches were harnessed in the fieldworks for this investigation, to acquire the most consummate knowledge possible about SGI's, and those who used and created them.

Only the three paradigms most germane to this study's selection of mixed research methods are discussed, as others fall beyond the scope of this treatise.

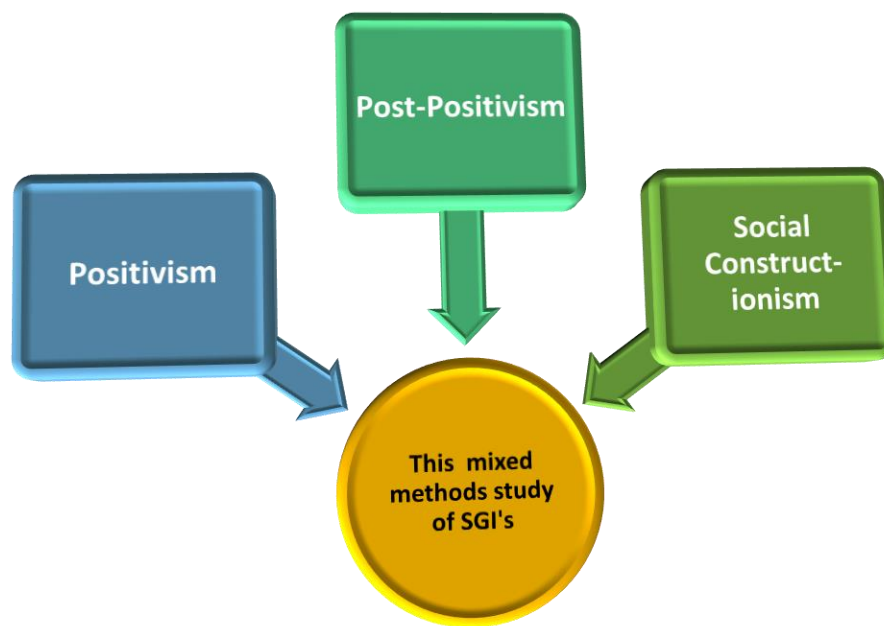


Figure 19 The three epistemological paradigms relevant to this SGI inquiry

Positivism

The Positivist epistemological paradigm, developed in the late nineteenth century, maintained that the ‘inductive’ scientific research methods of the hard sciences, like chemistry or physics, can be transposed onto inquiry in the social sciences, and therefore be legitimately used in the study and understanding of society (Comte, 1908). Empiricism, or the collection of reliable data that had been directly observed (quantitative specifically), allowed for the development of theories that were then, subsequently, robustly tested repeatedly, until only a minority remained unassailable, and so reached the status of a ‘Scientific Law’ (Crotty, 1998). Positivist research methodology is deterministic, and usually involves the search for external causal forces (Jupp, 1989). There is a conjuncture between Positivism and the ontological belief that external social forces which are assumed to control human behaviour in the social world, are comprehended to have originated from an external social ‘entity’ that exists outside human actions (Bachman & Schutt, 2007).

An awareness of the history of Positivism is important for this SGI investigation's use of mixed research methods, and it is certainly not just an academic historical curiosity, but rather represents one of the paradigms that are being comprehensively rejected here; namely, that only empirical quantitative data is valid for the collection of knowledge about SGI's.

Post-Positivism

Two of the most important authors to have helped propel the transformation from Positivism to Post-Positivism, are undoubtedly T. Kuhn (1996) and K. Popper (1935).

When Kuhn (1996) first published his classic polemical book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' in the 1960's, it purported to be merely a history of 'normal' or hard science. However, it sent shockwaves into the world of social science, as those who had grafted the epistemological assumptions of Positivist, Objectivist, Empiricist and Scientific Induction theory into their social research, suddenly discovered that the author had seriously undermined the methodological/academic foundations of their entire research. This was because Kuhn (Ibid) had denounced both science and scientists for having committed numerous deficiencies in their own oversight of the scientific method. Their research shortcomings included allowing external non-scientific factors to influence it, and being unable to pursue 'the truth' (Larvor, June 2003). Kuhn went on to label the social sciences as being '*pre-paradigmatic*', because no one paradigm had ever gained mastery of the discipline (Bryman, 2012, p. 630).

Karl Popper's (1935) ideas on Falsification, rather than Verification in scientific research methods, has also had a significant impact on research paradigms in the social sciences. The journey from Positivism, via the intermediary stage of Logical Positivism, to Post-Positivism, was certainly facilitated by Popper's ideas (Ritchie, 1937). Popper helped to undermine the goal of scientific enquiry when he contended

that ultimate truths cannot be proven by the collection of empirical evidence, followed by rigorous testing to arrive at a declaration of a final truth, or 'Law'. Rather, the current hegemonic scientific paradigm only stands until another one comes along to disprove, or falsify it. When Positivist social researchers attempt to emulate the scientific method, they are trying to emulate a fundamentally fallacious approach. If actual scientific inquiry transpired, not to be about proving truth, but instead, disproving 'untruths', then how can this approach possibly be adapted for social research? Social science investigations could never consist merely of disproving a series of untruths (Lakatos, 1974).

This SGI investigation rejected the sole use of one methodological paradigm, be it Positivism or Post-Positivism, and blended elements of both this, and the following approach, Social Constructionism, in its pragmatic approach to fieldwork.

Social Constructionism

With a discussion of Constructionism, as an epistemological and ontological paradigm, a dialectical and metaphysical barrier has been crossed that, for many social science researchers, can never, and should never, be bridged. The methodological purists, embodied by writers such as Guba (1987), hold to the 'Incompatibility Thesis', that the quantitative and qualitative can never be used in tandem for the same social research topic. Those who hold this epistemological/ontological dyadic view, do so with the Manichean dogma that one side is good and right, and the opposing one bad and fallacious. This SGI investigation has indeed transgressed the allegedly non-traversable barricade, by embracing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Guba (Ibid), and the other methodological purists, would doubtless be unnerved by such a combination of methodological incompatibilities, purporting to be a legitimate doctoral thesis investigating SGI's.

The Social Constructionist epistemology is intrinsically entwined with their ontological view of the nature of reality, i.e. it is concerned with the meanings and understandings of human interaction and activity; such meanings and understandings as have their beginnings in human shared assumptions. The way we formulate meanings is entirely socially, culturally and time specific. Social Constructionism is anti-essentialist, in that it possesses the conviction that we cannot reduce human characteristics or behaviour to objectively measurable or empirically discoverable traits. Finally, this constructivist epistemological approach, often adopts a critical perspective on the topics being investigated; it frequently examines how those with power in society are assumed to use their hegemonic supremacy, to either acquire money and property, or to attain their own desires and objectives (Lock & Strong, 2010).

For Constructionists, ontological assumptions about the social construction of reality, are inherently linked to qualitative research methods, such as participant observation, which is their chosen method '*par excellence*' (Brannan, 1995, p. 5). Such ideas flow from the social research ideas of members of the Chicago School, such as Park and Burgess (1969), who expounded upon the merits of ethnographic research methods. If the world known to humans is entirely socially constructed via human interactions, and the constant fluid negotiation of meanings and understandings, then the entire Positivist/Post-Positivist assumption of an external social reality/entity, separate to the individual, that could be scientifically, objectively, and empirically investigated and quantified, is anathema.

A critique of Social Constructionism

Two of the most telling epistemological critiques of the social constructionist epistemology represent reverse sides of the same coin.

Realism states that Social Constructionism is anti-Realist, in that its adherents deny that some knowledge can be an accurate perception of reality, despite the existence of incontrovertible facts or proof.

Conversely, if the accusation stands that all interpretative research is tarred with the brush of Relativism, there will inevitably be conjecture about who may judge the subjective findings of qualitative research, as to which are more meritorious, and have greater verity, than others (Andrews, 2012). Ultimately, if all research is entirely subjective, and no way exists to differentiate relevance and authenticity between rival findings from qualitative fieldworks or researchers, then the very act of conducting social research is rendered otiose.

This inquiry's adoption of fieldworks with mixed methods finds itself existentially situated between the two grinding, epistemological millstones, of Positivism/Post-Positivism and Social Constructionism. Previous sclerotic debates in the 'Paradigm Wars' over ontology and epistemology, are evaded by this inquiry's adherence to the 'what works' pragmatic stance. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed fruitfully, where appropriate, and intermingled to give the greatest insights possible into the use of SGI's, and the impacts on both users, and society. Specifically, the data from the online survey was used to inform the interview schedule for the SOECA officers interviewed during the Stage 2 fieldwork. The numbers of active SGI's users who had reported having problems with the material in the survey, and their worries and experiences about the criminal abuse of the images in terms of grooming, online CSA, IIOC's, sextortion, cyber-bullying/trolling, and cyber-stalking etc., all led directly to the shaping of the questions for the five serving MPS officers during the Stage 2 interviews. Additionally, the lack of awareness and personal experiences related by the survey respondents exposed many interstices concerning the criminal-

abuse of SGI's by online offenders, which then needed further probing with the SOECA officers, whose jobs involved investigating online child grooming, CSA and the self-production by children, of SGI's/IloC's. This formed part of the Delphi Technique employed in this research, which will be fully explored later in this chapter (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

Axiology

A brief examination of the concept of 'axiology', within social research in general, and in the conduct of this investigation into SGI's provides some fruitful discussion points. Axiology is usually accepted to mean the role of values and ethics when undertaking social research, and comprises one of the four fundamental belief systems which embody the various paradigms concerned in social research: epistemology, ontology, the relationship between knower and known, and finally axiology (Mertens & Bledsoe et al, 2010).

The Transformative Paradigm & Critical Theory

The transformative paradigm has had a powerful influence within many previous mixed research methodologies as the inherent power of an entrenched and prevailing research establishment, mirroring power relations in society at large, is pitted against those groups in society who are dominated and subjugated: e.g. women, LGBT's, ethnic minorities and the disabled, etc. In terms of this SGI investigation, both online pornography and SGI's would be seen by this hypothetically existent 'controlling' research establishment, as generally an injurious thing for individuals and society, promoting a range of ills, including: misogyny; sexist attitudes; the exploitation of actors and participants in the production of adult-entertainment; IloC's; distorted perceptions about the true nature of sex; the increased proliferation of STI's/HIV; and a multitude of cyber-woes, inflicted on both child and adult participants (sextortion, cyber-bullying and trolling, online child grooming, cyber-stalking, and romance

fraud, etc.). The potential espousal of a 'transformative paradigm' by the researcher using mixed methods, could challenge the hegemony of an alleged ascendant academic establishment's preponderant assumptions. It is oppressed minorities, like those SGI users in the LGBT, or sexual fetish community, who have the most to gain from embracing amateur pornography, namely sexual liberation and equal rights. The establishment is seen to have done all it can to resist such manoeuvres, maintaining until very recently a puritanical and censorious grip on both pornography and SGI's, and therefore suppressing the freedoms they endow for the oppressed. The adoption of a decidedly 'non-objective' axiology would have seen this investigation joining the fight for liberation, with those groups and minorities currently languishing powerless at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy (Mertens & Bledsoe et al, 2010). Just as the gay liberation movement has inverted the term 'queer', and urban blacks in the US use the term 'Nigga' in their street argot, so the online pornography/SGI user would no longer be construed negatively as 'the lonely wanker', long-held *idée fixe* (Wilchins, 2004; Young, 2007).

Critical theory forms a central part of the transformative paradigm, in its inherent affiliation for having sympathy and empathy with oppressed groups in society: the poor, women, immigrants, or the disabled, etc. In axiological terms, those who adopt a transformative paradigm/critical theory *a priori* stance, holding values in favour of oppressed groups in the research process, could be regarded as demonstrating estimable characteristics, particularly if the researcher's goal was to expose wrongdoing and iniquity, and try to improve the situation of the afflicted group being studied. Consider however, does such a researcher fairly and objectively deal with all the data/findings they gather, or does 'confirmation bias'¹¹ riddle their analysis and interpretation with subjectivity?

¹¹ A fuller discussion of confirmation bias is made later in the chapter.

This discussion of axiology brings into focus whether the researcher should ever make the attempt to be objective in their goals and views. But, those investigators who adopt a critical, or transformative, stance lay themselves open to their research findings being traduced as blemished with the twin flaws of bias and subjectivity. Despite some authorial leanings towards social and political libertarianism, the maxim adopted in this fieldwork, and in the analysis/discussion of its findings, is rather to 'let the data speak for itself', and abjure any axiological bias, thereby rejecting a critical/transformative ideological stance in its research methodology.

Ethical underpinnings of this SGI study

Before discussing the matters, which relate to the two specific research methods used in this study, namely the online survey and the semi-structured in-depth interviews, the guiding ethical principles which were followed need a discourse.

All the fieldwork was conducted within the guidelines set out by the ethical policy statement from Middlesex University, followed by the School of Law Ethics Sub-Committee, entitled 'Code of Practice for Research Principles and Procedures' (Middlesex University, 2011).

The ESRC's six core ethical principles for primary research

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2012), published a Framework for Research Ethics (FRE), which they have condensed into six fundamental guidelines. These provide the spine of the ethical principles incorporated into this SGI investigation, and comprise:



Figure 20 The ESRC's six ethical principles & this three stage SGI research

1) 'Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and the intended possible uses of the research; what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved. Some variation is allowed in very specific research contexts...' (ESRC, 2012).

Gaining 'informed consent' is one of the fundamental ethical principles of modern academic research, and it played an integral role in the three stages of fieldwork for this study into SGI's. Gone are the days when the practices of the infamous Milgram Experiment, could end up reoccurring (Herrara, 2001). Those who agreed to take part in all three stages of the primary research were fully informed in advance, via a Participant Information Sheet (PIS), about the nature of the SGI investigation to which they were considering contributing (see Appendices 3, 4 & 5 for 'informed consent' declaration forms and PI sheets). The online survey, conducted via SurveyMonkey,

displayed the PIS on its landing page, before the questionnaire commenced, and participants had to read it, and then click on a 'Yes' button, before proceeding to the survey proper. This was a pragmatic solution, and the research norm, for the absence of signing an actual informed consent declaration by anonymous online research subjects. For the five in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face, interviews in Stage 2 of the fieldwork, officers from SOECA were given two copies (one to retain), of the PIS to read first, and they then signed and dated both, to indicate their informed consent to participate in the interviews. The interviews were conducted at the officer's place of work (see Appendix 4 for the Stage 2 interview schedule). For the Stage 3 Skype follow-up interviews, with five volunteers from the survey, the interviewees were either emailed the PIS, or read it verbally, if this was not possible, as some remained totally anonymous, giving only a Skype address. All five were asked for their verbal informed consent to partake in the study, before the interviews began, and further, were advised that they could withdraw from the research without prejudice, at any point.

In all three stages of the fieldwork, the nature of the research as a part of a PhD research thesis into SGI's, was fully disclosed to all participants, as was the potential uses of the findings following its publication.

2) *'The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected'* (ESRC, 2012).

Safeguarding the confidentiality and anonymity, of the research participants in this investigation were both of utmost importance. Pornography is an issue which can, and often does, engender great anger, controversy, opposition, shame and stigma. In the light of these issues, ensuring the confidentiality/anonymity of research participants, attained an enhanced importance.

When completing the initial online, Stage 1 survey, respondents were not asked during the main questionnaire for any details that could lead to their identification, such as their names, telephone numbers, or email addresses. Furthermore, no

recordings of their Internet Protocol (IP) address details were made, making it impossible to identify the digital device (computer, tablet, games-console, or mobile phone etc.) from which the survey was completed. These protocols ensured that the survey participants were guaranteed the fullest confidentiality and anonymity possible; there would be no conceivable way of making any personal identifications. The responses generated from the online questionnaire, were then merged into quantum metadata form, and this further augmented participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Only at the very conclusion of the survey¹², were participants who might be interested in volunteering for the Stage 3 interviews, then invited to input their contact details, in order that the researcher could contact them, if selected. In this final, open-ended question, on the survey (which only thirty-five respondents completed), and with volunteers only, the researcher could collect participant contact details, for the Stage 3 interviews. However, the participant's confidentiality and anonymity remained an overriding concern even at this point, as the contact details requested were only Skype account designations, or email addresses; no names, or any other identifiers were requested. When the Stage 3 interviews were conducted, some were executed without the interlocutor using any name at all for the respondent, while a couple of respondents used a *nom de plume*. In the following results and discussion chapters (six-to-eight), the five interviewees were assigned popular names from current birth certificate registrations in the UK, to safeguard their anonymity and confidentiality. In the same manner, during Stage 2 of the fieldwork, the five SOECA officers interviewed were assigned the labels, 'Officers 1-5', and their qualitative statements were presented under those monikers too. Furthermore, all digital recordings and transcripts of the interviews were held securely under a password protected computer, to robustly maintain their confidentiality and anonymity.

¹² See question 35 of the survey, in Appendix 3

The researcher endeavoured to uphold the highest ethical probity in dealing with respondents in all three Stages of the fieldwork, and all participants were fully informed of these procedures, via their PIS's.

3) *'Research participants must take place voluntarily, free from coercion'* (Ibid).

The volunteers for the initial survey, were found through a combination of snowball/convenience sampling, so no claims will be made as to accuracy in terms of a statistically representative sample of any whole population. Participants chose of their own accord whether to participate, by clicking on a 'hotlink', which took them directly to the landing page of the survey, where they were presented with the PIS. Respondents were then free to complete the survey, after clicking the 'Yes' button in lieu of informed consent, in the privacy of their own personal environments, on the online device of their preference, and at the time of their choice. There was a button to quit the survey, on every online webpage/section too, for those who wished to exit after partially completing it. Interestingly, as will be explored more fully later, around 25% of the 848 respondents, did withdraw before fully completing it; the clear majority of these did so almost immediately after the initial demographic/social characteristic questions (one-to-nine) were answered.

A total of thirty-five research participants, all active SGI users, had volunteered their contact details in response to the invitation to participate in the Stage 3 interviews. However, ultimately only five, from a range of demographic and personal backgrounds, were selected to participate in them. As previously demonstrated in [Figure 16](#), this five was reduced from the original ten that had been planned, as these thirty-five 'volunteers' fell away during a long process of attrition.

For the Stage 2 interviews, an introduction to the group of five SOECA officers, via their commanding officer (acting as gatekeeper), was made by the researcher's Director of Studies, Dr. Martellozzo (2012), who had previously worked with them closely on the research for her own book on policing online CSA. The officers volunteered to be interviewed, after being asked by their commanding officer if they

were interested in participating. This ensured compliance with the voluntary, and without coercion, ethical stipulations of the ESRC's guidelines for research respondents.

All the participants in this inquiry into SGI's, during both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, were enlisted in an entirely voluntary capacity, without the slightest coercion or deception on the part of the inquirer.

4) 'Harm to research participants and researchers must be avoided at all instances' (ESRC, 2012).

The case of the Tuskegee Syphilis study, from 1932-72, provides an excellent example of how research can either deliberately or accidentally harm the participants. Here, 412 black men in Alabama were deceived into thinking they were receiving a cure for their bacterial infection, but were surreptitiously given a placebo, so the progress of the disease could be monitored by doctors (Pritchard, 2006).

Protecting the research participants from harm, while prosecuting this investigation into SGI's, potentially revealed some psychological, and emotional issues, among those who have a level of involvement in the production, dissemination or consumption of online pornography. Undoubtedly, some research participants may have felt embarrassed, regretful or ashamed of their actions, and an emotional response may have been triggered by answering questions on the subject. For example, one participant who had completed the online survey, and who was personally known to the researcher, revealed that he had lied about using online pornography, in a later conversation. He said he was worried about the survey not being 'truly anonymous', and consequently had answered untruthfully. Also, two of the five interviewees in the Stage 3 fieldwork, contradicted themselves during their interviews on the topic of whether they had ever created SGI's. Both initially claimed not to have ever sent an SGI, but later revealed that they had sent some, if in very limited numbers. The reason for this seemed to be that initial reticence was overcome

later in the interviews, as a more empathetic relationship developed, one more conducive to candid disclosures about their SGI creating experiences. Conversely, the two gay male participants in Stage 3 had both created, viewed and used SGI's extensively, and were extremely blasé about the whole process, regarding such actions as completely normal behaviour, in the context of their extensive deployment of SGI's to arrange casual sex on hooking-up apps.

During both quantitative and qualitative sections of the fieldwork, the investigator cautioned respondents in advance of the likely sensitive nature of the topic through their PIS's, and was highly alert to the emotional state of participants, particularly in the interviews. Emotional distress to the participants, and the researcher too, was far more likely in Stage 3 of the fieldwork, as this was where the greatest degree of personal contact (albeit via Skype), between interviewer and SGI users occurred. The PIS had an extensive range of contact details on it, offering: advice, counselling, support organisations, and relevant police contact information points, for respondents to consult and use if needed after their interview concluded. In the event, the five Stage 3 interviews went very smoothly, without any evident signs of discomfort or distress, regarding the SGI topics ranged-over, during the discourse.

The personal safety of the researcher was also protected during the Stage 2 interviews, by informing a third person of where and when they were scheduled to take place; although interviewing serving MPS detectives, at their place of work, was undoubtedly, one of the safest environments in which to conduct fieldwork. For Stage 3 however, the use of Skype to conduct the interviews was a great benefit in promoting the physical health and safety of both the participants and the researcher.

One potentially disturbing moral conundrum that could have occurred in the Stage 3 interviews was the disclosure, to the researcher, by the participants, of abusive or illegal activities that they had participated in, during the making of their SGI's. This threw up a 'duty of care' question, to report illegal activities if a vulnerable child, or adult was at risk of harm. The need to report such an eventuality to the relevant

authorities, would have indisputably over-ridden any guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity given, *a priori*, to those participating in the interviews. This caveat, to the participants' anonymity/confidentiality, was made explicit to interviewees on the PIS/informed consent sheet given out before each interview was conducted. In the event, no such concerns/issues came to light, but the ethical groundwork needed to be in place, in the eventuality that it had.

The SOECA officers, interviewed during the Stage 2 fieldwork, displayed a high degree of professionalism and sensitivity when relating their experiences over many years of investigating and prosecuting online offenders and their criminal abuse of SGI's.

5) *'The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit'* (ESRC, 2012).

During this SGI investigation, independence from external bodies, such as funding agencies, pressure groups, charities, political organisations or government bodies, was maintained. The inquiry was carried out for the pursuit of knowledge into a relatively new area that is still rapidly emerging and changing, with the hope of bringing to light insights and issues surrounding individuals use of SGI's, and the societal/personal consequences of their activities. The researcher strove to conduct balanced assessments and interpretations of any findings discovered, when examining questions about these impacts. As an independent piece of research, towards a PhD thesis, there were absolutely no conflicts of interests with any outside organisations, whether for funding, employment or political purposes. The cost of the PhD fees was borne entirely by the inquirer, without any support, additions or contributions from any other third party.

6) *'Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency'* (ESRC, 2012).

Examination of a classic piece of sociological research, with major ethical implications for this maxim, is of benefit here. Laud Humphreys, in his 1970 book 'Tea Room Trade', could be accused by modern ethical standards of transgressing all three of the integrity, quality and transparency requirements for social researchers. He used deception, to pose as a 'watch queen' in the public toilets (Tea Rooms), where homosexual men loitered for clandestine casual sexual encounters, and failed to disclose, in advance, that he was a researcher, thus gaining no informed consent from those who frequented them (Babbie, 2004).

The researcher's Doctoral Supervisors, reviewed both the quantitative and qualitative research methods employed for this SGI research, and each of the three stages of fieldwork was separately reviewed, and approved, by the School of Law's Ethics Sub-Committee, to ensure that the ESRC guidelines for integrity, quality and transparency, were fulfilled, before actual implementation of the three stages of fieldwork.

The literature review & this study's fieldwork

All three of the fieldwork stages of this investigation into SGI's, benefited from the knowledge, insights, and theories that were garnered while carrying out the literature review for this thesis. Although, it must be noted that, the survey research took place in the summer of 2014, and Stage 2 in spring 2015, therefore some material was read after their respective completion. Nevertheless, each separate stage of this SGI research was augmented by an awareness of what had gone before, and its successes and failures; also, where gaps in knowledge existed, due to the absence of any earlier research. Such an approach embodied the application of the principals of methodological triangulation, by alloying pre-existing secondary sources/research, with the quantitative and qualitative research tools used here to study SGI's (Denzin, 2012).

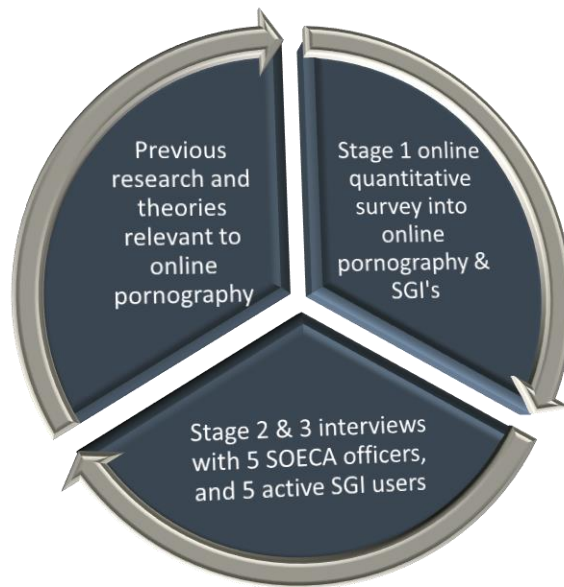


Figure 21 Denzin's concept of methodological triangulation and this SGI study

Several large-scale, online quantitative research studies have taken place, about the topics of either sex, or general online pornography use, such as the British Sex Survey (Mann, 2014). These provided excellent groundwork for the phrasing of the questions on the survey, despite being very broad, unlike the tightly focussed remit of this investigation on SGI's. Previous studies also helped to ensure that almost all the questions on the survey were closed in nature, thus allowing the generation of manageable and analysable quantitative data; although comment boxes were provided with many of these questions to allow respondents some freedom to express more individualistic responses, if they desired (Bazeley, 2010). The qualitative elements of the fieldwork's research findings were, deliberately, largely reserved for the subsequent ten interviews.

The Stage 2 interview schedule¹³ was strongly influenced by qualitative PhD fieldwork into online CSA, with officers from the same SOECA unit, conducted a decade earlier by Martellozzo (2012); although that work was more focussed on the online child grooming activities of offenders, and the MPS officer's responses to it, in an online era when SGI's were still only a nascent threat to children, as self-produced IIOC's. Still, the approaches employed to fruitfully engage with the SOECA officers, to bring out their experiences, and views on the emerging dangers of SGI's for children and adults, were instrumental in honing the Stage 2 interview schedule. The two pieces of research did diverge significantly however, not just in their goals, but also in their research methods too, with the earlier work involving both the researcher embedding herself into the unit for several years, and observing online 'live' interactions between undercover police officers, and those offenders engaged in child grooming activities. A further difference was that the earlier research also employed face-to-face interviews with twenty-one officers who were working in this field (Ibid). This current SGI investigation diverged in two other ways: firstly, it was only a snapshot, of one-off quantitative and qualitative fieldwork, and not a more longitudinal ethnographic study (Park & Burgess, 1969). Finally, it employed a mixed method approach blending quantitative and qualitative tools, rather than combining two more qualitative approaches, of non-participant observation and unstructured interviewing.

The influence of The Porn Report, by McKee et al.

One significant influence on the conduct, and question formats, of the Stage 3 interviews, was 'The Porn Report', by McKee, et al (2008); although that study was about general pornography, and not just its online variant, or SGI's. The Australian researchers deployed a large quantitative self-selection sample survey, of just over 1,000 respondents, for their initial fieldwork. McKee et al's participants were

¹³ See Appendix 4

contacted by the researchers by three means: firstly, paper copies were included with postal DVD purchases of adult-entertainment movies; secondly, via a newspaper advertisement; and thirdly, with an online version of the survey. They then conducted forty-six follow-up qualitative interviews, with volunteers who had given their contact details on the otherwise anonymous initial survey. The influence on this SGI fieldwork is clear; namely, a large, anonymous self-selection quantitative survey, followed by a small number of follow-up qualitative interviews with volunteers from the survey. Mobile online technology and Wi-Fi/broadband connectivity has advanced significantly since the research was conducted for that study, and the topic here under investigation has been severely tapered to encompass only SGI's in online pornography. The methodological research indebtedness to McKee et al's (2008) pioneering study is, however, nonetheless profound.

Methodological triangulation

Methodological triangulation is frequently cited as one of the main reasons why mixed methods are the most suited to investigate a research topic, and this is a truism for this SGI inquiry (Bryman, 2012). The original nautical term of 'triangulation', as a mechanism for checking the longitude/latitude of a ship, was adapted enthusiastically by many within the social science research community from the 1960's onwards. The unlikely progenitors for transferring this concept across to social science research were the psychologists Campbell & Fiske (1959), who published a paper in which they laid out a justification for the use of different types of quantitative methods in their study of personality traits.

N. K. Denzin

The latter stages of social research's development of methodological triangulation can largely be attributed to the work of N. K. Denzin (2012), who endeavoured assiduously to enlarge the concept way beyond the simple use of mere multiple-methods for data cross-checking. He stretched the definition's parameters to include: a plurality of observers, data sources, sociological theories and research methods (Bryman, 2012). It is in this catholic context therefore, that methodological triangulation is espoused in this investigation's approach and analysis of data into SGI's.

Triangulation, as an effectual methodological tool, may now have reached its acme, as some commentators have contended that its greatest functionality may not actually be in uncovering convergence between different data sources from the use of opposing quantitative, or qualitative, approaches; but inversely, in seeking to discover points of divergence and dissonance between these varying data founts. In this visualisation, the goal of triangulation is to bring forth new knowledge, through the reaction of the researcher to the discovery of dialectics within their fieldwork findings (Greene & Hall, 2010).

The use of an online survey, for this fieldwork into SGI's, and then two separate instances of qualitative semi-structured interviews, was emphatically not constrained to the mere 'checking' of data for consistency between the findings generated from two different research methods, in the Campbell and Fiske (1959) sense of triangulation. Rather, the more expansive definition accorded to it by both Bryman (2012) and Denzin (2012), of the blending of different theoretical stances, data sources, and methodological paradigms, was energetically embraced.

The Delphi Technique of Dalkey & Helmer

The Delphi Technique, for conducting research, was developed by Dalkey and Helmer (1963) and is a well-respected, and much used method, for achieving a consensus about the subject matter under investigation, and ultimately a convergence of expertise (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). It works on the maxim that when conducting research, numerous wise heads are better than only one, or indeed, a handful (Dalkey, 1972). Furthermore, this collective sagacity goes through various rounds, or stages, within the research process, with each subsequent stage being informed and enhanced by the collective acumen reached in the previous one. The initial Delphi Technique, employed the circulation of different 'rounds' or 'iterations' of questionnaires to attain this goal (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). However, in this study, the concept is stretched to encompass both the quantitative method in the survey, and the qualitative tools, harnessed in the latter interviews. The influence of the Delphi Technique on this investigation's mixed research methodology is fervent. Knowledge, views, opinions, facts, and most importantly, feedback from the research participants (from the initial survey) were all coalesced and funnelled into the creation of the next stage of the fieldwork, shaping the very nature of the interview schedule for the SOECA officers; and, in turn, both have contributed to the creation of the questions that were put to the Stage 3 interviewees¹⁴. Each new stage of fieldwork was formulated by focusing all acquired knowledge through the lens of this augmented collective understanding, gained from the previous stage/s of the fieldwork.

Moreover, this current SGI research shares some elements, but not all, with that conducted by Martellozzo et al (2016), into the use of online legal pornography by UK schoolchildren. The Delphi Technique, used for informing the subsequent stages of research to achieve their undisputed betterment in attaining the objectives set, is evident in both studies.

¹⁴ See Appendix 5

Grounded Theory from Glaser & Strauss

Elements of Grounded Theory praxis, pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967), were incorporated into the methodological stance taken to discover this research's aims and objectives. However, their original vision was for rounds of comparative qualitative data analysis to occur, to allow for potential new discoveries and theories to emerge from each round. Obviously, the presence of the survey, clearly distinguishes this SGI inquiry from that of the purely qualitative methodological approach envisaged for the original remit of Grounded Theory. Nevertheless, the pragmatic worldview paradigm championed in this SGI study, demands the adoption, and modification, of all useful approaches, under the justification of the 'what works best' maxim (Creswell, 2009). This point can be illustrated, with an actual example of one important and major new discovery that has emerged out of this SGI investigation; namely, a six-element classification of the main SGI types has been uncovered, as will be explored in the forthcoming chapter six. These newly uncovered SGI taxonomical categories rebut any possible critique of the methodological approach employed in this study, that it is only searching for the confirmation/rejection of pre-existing ideas and theories, held *a priori*, either by the investigator, or other writers (Jupp, 2006).

Grounded Theory, as developed by Glaser and Strauss, overlaps in many ways with the mixed research methods, pragmatic worldview, adopted in this SGI study. Many of the central tenets for successful grounded research, converged strongly with the methodological conduct of this SGI inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). So, for instance, the researcher should have an awareness of possible bias, an ability to be reflective upon what has been heard and seen in the fieldwork, and a sensitivity towards the words and opinions of those interviewed. These were all apposite tools and skills for the researcher to possess while conducting the interviews, and did produce, in turn, some genuine new revelations about SGI use, among gay men; also, the theoretical role of SGI's as potential pedagogical tools, for example, as digital privacy and safety discussion tools, within PSHE/SRE classes on the formal school curriculum.

Data quality in the findings

Reliability

The mixed methods nature of this research necessitated that the matters of data reliability and validity were meticulously scrutinised, both for the initial survey, and for the subsequent qualitative interviews.

For quantitative methods, Bryman (2012) breaks down reliability into three concepts: stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency. Only the first two of these are applicable here, as the multiple-researchers required for the latter concept, were not used in this single-researcher study. Stability represents the ability to rerun the research method, on the same sample, to check later whether answers to identical questions remain constant on both the implementations. The stability of the data quality of the survey would therefore be regarded as low, as the online questionnaire used a snowball/convenience sample and no means existed to re-contact those same research participants, and get them to replicate their participation. Most of these criticisms are rebutted thus: there was no viable way to create a sampling frame of SGI users from which to recruit participants from online adult pornography users, and therefore criticising this actuality, on the grounds of methodological stability, would be a fatuous endeavour. As pragmatic researchers, it is axiomatic that we are all forced to work with the tools that are available to us. Consequently, if the data quality of the survey were to be castigated by critics, for being low in terms of its stability and reliability, then the twin responses of: 'there is nothing else', and we employ 'what works', must be sufficient to repudiate this negative appraisal (Creswell, 2013).

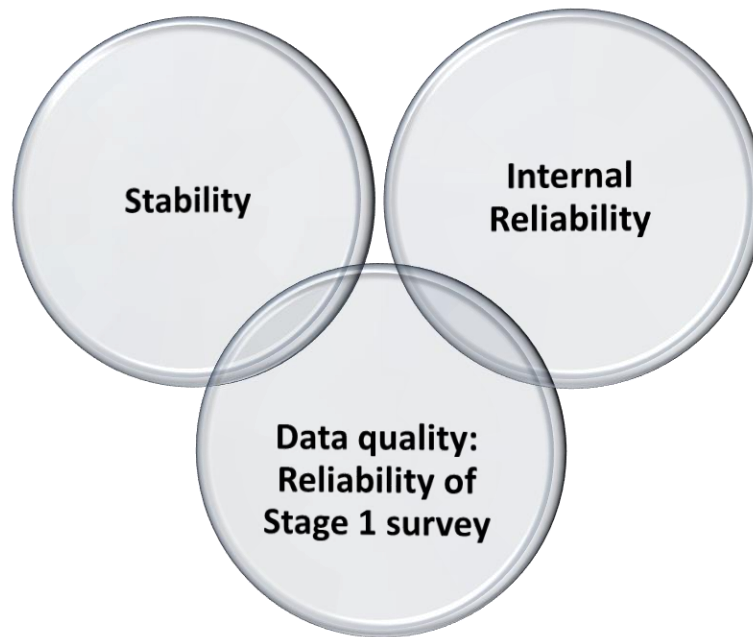


Figure 22 Issues concerning data quality in the Stage 1 online survey

'Internal reliability' comprises Bryman's (2012), second measure of quantitative research's overall reliability. This involves different questions being used to test participants for the same responses, to check the consistency of their answers, thus ensuring that survey results are as accurate and legitimate as possible. For the survey, several questions were posed which tested for different responses to aspects of the same topic, so bolstering its internal reliability and overall data quality.

The issue of data quality for the qualitative semi-structured interviews, required a discourse too. Both these incidences of semi-structured interviewing would be accorded a very low ranking in Bryman's (Ibid) reliability parameters, as all the ten separate interviews could never be replicated. Each of the ten SGI interview iterations was unquestionably *sui generis*, a never-to-be-emulated experience of an interaction between interviewer and interviewee, utterly unique. To be fair, this is the case for all semi-structured qualitative interviews, not just those in this fieldwork. It is hypothetically possible to get the same interviewer and participant back together, with the original interview schedule intact, but all the following issues will have

changed to some extent: events contemporaneous to the original interview would have altered and new ones replaced them, changing any answers given; there may have been changes to the number and topics of any sub-questions asked; different interviewee/interviewer digressions would occur between the two events; and lastly, any empathy or relationship between the interlocutor, and the research respondent, would have altered irrevocably in the passing of time. In addition, some of the interviewees may have become difficult, or impossible, to contact.

Clearly, all qualitative interviews and research methods are viewed as being of low data quality in terms of reliability. However, this SGI investigation rejected a mono-methodological approach in favour of a mixed method based one, and therefore the limitations attached to a single methodological component were, to some degree, ameliorated. Regarding this SGI inquiry, the pragmatic view of complementary and varied investigative research techniques, was both embraced and commended (Onwuegbuzie & Leach, 2005). The application of the Delphi Technique to the three stages of the SGI fieldwork certainly acted to augment the overall data quality in terms of both reliability, and validity, as will be seen in the next three chapters.

Validity

The low technical reading of the reliability of the primary data in this SGI study is, however, more than negated by the incisive and accurate validity of the findings produced. Through the Stage 2 interviews, the views of the five SOECA officers working in the field of online offending, provided a rich and detailed insight into the increasing role of SGI's in online CSA, child grooming and the self-production of IIOC's. Moreover, the five Stage 3 interviews furnished a unique vein of revelatory and accurate findings on SGI use, uncovered by the responses made during the dialogue.

Bryman: Face Validity & Convergent Validity

Bryman (2012) categorised five possible conceptualisations of validity, although only two are of relevance to this SGI investigation. Firstly, 'Face Validity', whereby other experts in the same field are called upon to judge whether the questions asked truly allow an accurate measure of the concept being investigated. The survey underwent a meticulous and rigorous pilot study procedure. However, some errors and ambiguities emerged after the survey went live, almost inevitably; to assume otherwise would be an act of supreme hubris. However, as much as was humanly possible has been done, to attempt to keep these errors to a minimum. The survey pilot study was examined by the study's Doctoral Supervisors and by a small number of professional colleagues, to endeavour to identify and eliminate as many errors as possible. The questionnaire was also submitted, as part of the rolling ethical approval process, to the chair of the ethics subcommittee for scrutiny before being executed.

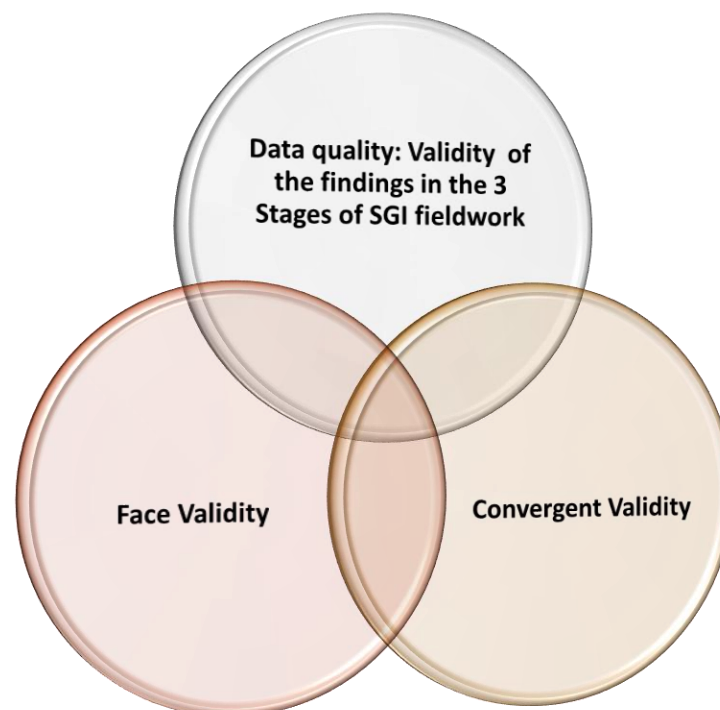


Figure 23 Data quality & Validity in the 3 Stages of SGI research

Bryman's (2012) 'Convergent Validity' had some applicability to this mixed method SGI investigation, as the interviews were used to explore the accuracy and veracity of the answers first given by the participants on the survey, as well as for following up interesting points and seeking elucidation upon others. This was particularly true of the exploration of areas where little data had been uncovered, such as the criminal abuse of SGI's (Ibid). The data quality of the research findings was undoubtedly significantly enhanced through this verification process, in a process that encompassed application of the Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

Overcoming vulnerabilities in the Data Quality of the findings

Any vulnerabilities to the data quality of the findings produced by this mixed method stance were largely negated by embracing pragmatic tactics (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, use of the Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007) allowed for constant checking of the data accuracy, and the engagement of methodological triangulation further buttressed these measures, confirming or rejecting findings across the primary stages, and cross-checking with existing research knowledge already published (Denzin, 2012). Finally, the employment of elements of Grounded Theory in this inquiry, has allowed for the emergence of new discoveries, findings and theories in terms of SGI's (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Two cases can be adduced to illustrate and evidence this claim. Firstly, anticipating the results and discussion chapters (six to eight), of this work, the discovery that gay and bisexual men use SGI's at a far more accelerated rate than heterosexuals, and that they use them in a very different way, creating more of their own SGI's for mutual trading on the gay hooking-up apps, to facilitate no strings attached (NSA) casual-sex; whereas heterosexuals alternatively consume SGI's more passively, largely from PornTube websites. The causes of this may be due to the symbiosis of greater sexual freedoms, which have flowed since the 1967 decriminalisation of private homosexual acts between men over the age of twenty-one (Bull, 2008), and the cultural spread of online pornography into

the wider media, as argued by McNair (2002) and Paasonen et al (2007). McNair asserted that we now live in a 'striptease culture', while Paasonen, that the mass media has become 'pornified'.

A second example is the finding in the fieldworks that very few of the 603 respondents in the survey, or among the five active SGI users' in the Stage 3 interviews, had encountered harmful or disturbing incidences of the criminal abuse of SGI's. It was left to the Stage 2 interviews with the SOECA officers, to elicit the extreme risks, and hazardous consequences, of the abuse of SGI's by online offenders for: CSA, child grooming, sextortion and procuring IloC's/SGI's etc. Thus, this investigation has generated the following new theory, that SGI's may be largely used harmlessly by most adults, but in a small minority of cases, especially for children, but also for some adults, they represent a highly dangerous risk that can, and does, lead to an array of deleterious personal impacts, all the way up to suicide and murder.

The Stage 1 online quantitative survey

Many of the details of the online survey have already been covered, but a graphical summary can be seen in [Figure 24](#), on the next page.

The survey was a non-probability sample which does not purport to accurately reflect any wider population in miniature. Therefore, no claims about the characteristics/views of the wider population can be inferred or extrapolated from this sample (Lang, 1996). Nor can any 'Generalisability' be applied to any whole population, from the data generated on SGI use in the survey (Gomm, 2008). The descriptive statistics used are often perceived as simpler to handle than inferential statistics, but they do however, have three effective uses for this investigation into SGI's. Firstly, the ability to check the characteristics and variables of the participants in the sample; secondly, the exploration of any possible correlations between such characteristics (such as age or gender etc.), and SGI experiences and attitudes; and

finally, for providing key findings to answer some of the core research questions of this thesis, so fulfilling its overall objectives (Pallant, 2010).

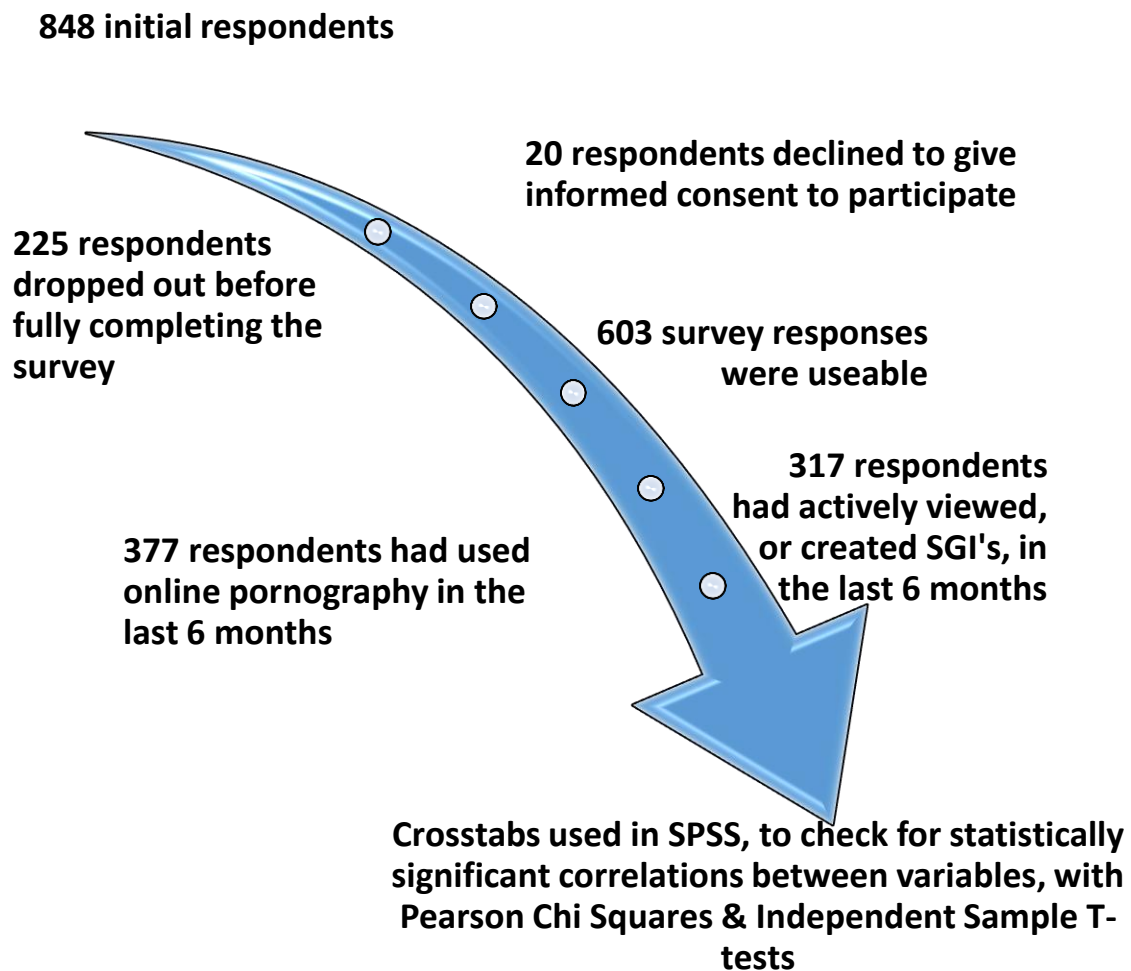


Figure 24 The Stage 1 online survey process & analysis

Some of the respondents in the snowball/chain sample undoubtedly recruited other acquaintances who shared their interests by forwarding the link to the survey, hence the chain metaphor; it is also known as a convenience sample for its 'availability', 'accidental' or 'judgemental' nature as it invited any online user (over 18), to participate in this open process (Crow & Semmens, 2008). However, Creswell (2013) warned that the practical benefits of these methods, in terms of time and money, may

be outweighed by the commensurate deterioration of data quality from the erosion of credibility in the findings, a topic discussed earlier.

The potential pitfall of a skewed or biased cohort resulting from the self-selection sample in the survey, needed to be negotiated very carefully. The very openness and availability of such online surveys as this, and the lack of control exercised by the researcher over the selection of participants, could have conspicuously exacerbated the unrepresentative nature of any data collected, and could have led to a wide divergence from reality, should any generalising have taken place, thus eroding data quality (Bethlehem, 2008). Alfred Kinsey's famous sex-research for his two published reports in 1948/53, can be adduced to support this. Kinsey massively overestimated that 10% of the US population was gay, but this was based on a self-selection sample of participants who proved to be far more sexually adventurous and liberal than the norm; the actual figure was later determined to be around 5% (Jones, 2004).

The SGI survey¹⁵ comprised of mostly closed-ended questions, as this made coding of responses much more straightforward. A typical five point Likert Scale was frequently employed, ranging from the Strongly Agree, to Strongly Disagree responses (Bryman, 2012), as were several matrix style response options.

The online survey proved to be an appropriate mechanism to collect information on SGI's, because it allowed data to be collected from many respondents (N848), spread across a wide geographical area, including a minority from beyond the UK's borders. Furthermore, a lot of straightforward factual data was collected about characteristics such as gender, age and sexuality, and the extent of respondents' use/exposure to both online pornography and SGI's. An abundant vein of attitudinal responses was also rapidly and inexpensively mined, from the responses of both the users and non-users of online pornography/SGI's (Denscombe, 2010). The survey also served the vital

¹⁵ See Appendix 3 for the Stage 1 survey

function of furnishing the means to establish contact with the SGI user/volunteers for the Stage 3 interviews.

The Stage 2 & 3 interviews

The findings from the preceding survey, were used to formulate the questions on the interview schedules for both Stages 2 and 3¹⁶, per the precepts of the Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Thus, the lack of negative experiences among active SGI users from the survey, helped to underscore the void that needed further exploration with the Stage 2 SOECA interviewees, in terms of the prevalence of dangers and harms that can be inflicted on some through the criminal abuse of SGI's.

As with all effective qualitative interviewing, a range of techniques was used to elucidate greater depth, richness and veracity, into the issues surrounding SGI's which had come to light. These included: the asking of exploratory questions; provoking stimulating conversational anecdotes; and the encouragement of interesting digressions involving respondents' experiences with SGI's. Consider the following illustrative example, of how the Delphi Technique operated on the three stages of this fieldwork. The survey revealed that LGBT men created, viewed and used, SGI's at a far greater rate than heterosexuals. This then led to discussions in both the Stage 2 and 3 interviews, about how covering the issues of SGI's within PSHE/SRE in schools might be of real benefit to all children, but particularly adolescent LGBT ones, in promoting their awareness of measures to improve individual digital privacy and security, and augmenting their online health and safety; all this cascading out of the findings from the survey, which had revealed elevated SGI use, with both hooking-up apps and webcam sex. Finally, the two gay male interviewees were then asked about their experiences with using SGI's on online hooking-up apps, and whether they had ever seen suspected under-eighteens on those platforms, and their

¹⁶ See Appendices 4 & 5

views on the role of PSHE/SRE in raising awareness about SGI issues for LGBT children for their personal safety and physical and sexual health. This example is just one of many similar, in which the survey informed the interview schedule for the SOECA officers, and was then tested against the real-life experiences of actual SGI users during Stage 3.

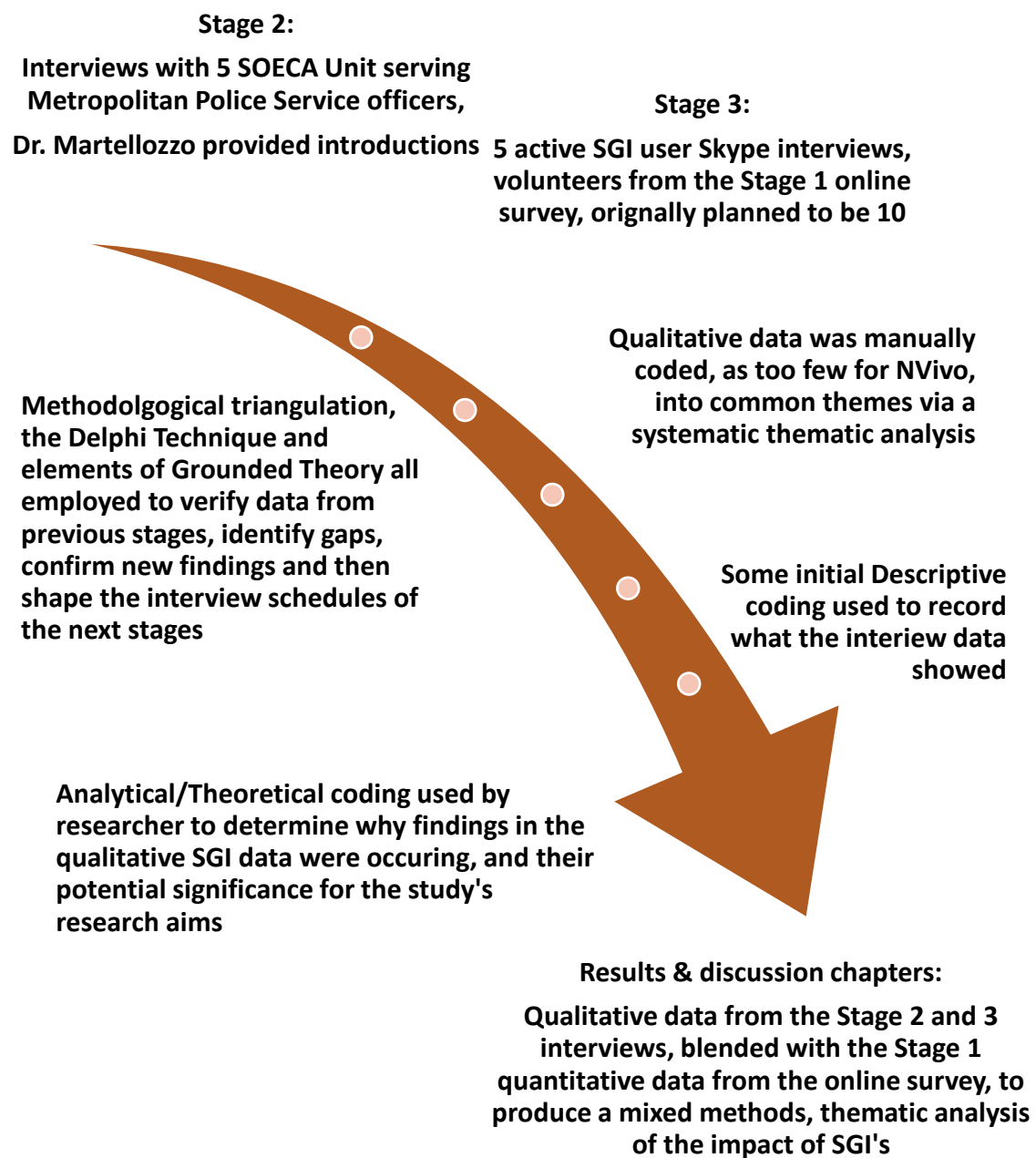


Figure 25 The Stage 2 & 3 interview procedure and analysis process

Following on from the survey, in-depth semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate qualitative research method for attaining the findings needed to answer the research objectives of this investigation, in preference to the range of predominantly more impractical alternatives: ethnography, observation, focus groups, discourse analysis, or textual analysis (Walliman, 2006). Obviously, the intrinsic nature of conducting research into online pornography precluded most of these alternative methodological apparatuses, except for the textual (or pictorial) analysis of actual SGI's, uploaded and published on the internet. This method would have possessed two fatal flaws: firstly, it had more in common with an examination of secondary material (published SGI images), rather than a true primary investigation; and secondly, it would have contained the very real possibility of the researcher stumbling accidentally across SGI's that were also simultaneously IIoC's: the self-taken and self-posted, sexual images of children; or, possibly worse, SGI's orchestrated by CSA offenders, and published online for other criminals to trade, share, view and buy. A solitary researcher, would have been at grave risk of inadvertently incriminating themselves, if such a pictorial (textual) analysis research method had been employed.

The semi-structured, in-depth interview method, selected for Stages 2 and 3 of this fieldwork into SGI's, was indubitably the most practical, pragmatic and pertinent of the qualitative approaches to achieve this investigation's goals. Further, the application of the Delphi Technique and methodological triangulation, as each of the three stages of the fieldwork progressed, allowed for the checking, shaping, confirming or rejecting, challenging, and greater exploration of findings, or sometimes the very lack of them in terms of criminal abuse of SGI's, uncovered in the earlier phases.

The five Skype, in-depth, semi-structured interviews for Stage 3 took place from among the thirty-five volunteers who gave their contact details after the online survey. Data quality, not quantity, was the uppermost concern here, along with the

pragmatics of being a sole researcher already conducting and analysing the data from the preceding two stages of the fieldwork. The Stage 3 interviews were semi-structured in format, as opposed to structured or unstructured, and accordingly participants initial survey forms and the interview schedule, provided a spine of areas for the interviewer to cover in a discourse, enabling an exploration of their usage, experiences and attitudes towards SGI's. The existence of this research backbone, prevented both the researcher and respondents from venturing too far off-piste from the topic of SGI's, whilst still allowing plenty of room for some appropriate digressions and supplementary probing questions (Bryman, 1988). The interview schedule for the Stage 3 fieldwork was also strongly influenced by the findings from the Stage 2 interviews, regarding the potential hazards and criminal abuse of online SGI's. Although the five Stage 3 interviewees had seen and experienced little first-hand of these dangers, nevertheless their thoughts were elucidated on topics such as: promoting online digital security and privacy; SGI's potential sexual literacy raising role within PSHE/SRE in schools and the hazards to the health and safety of those who create, and send SGI's to others, online.

Five face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the SOECA officers, for the Stage 2 fieldwork, and their professional/vocational experiences with SGI's were drawn upon to answer one of main research objectives of this study, the extent of the harm that they do to individuals and society. This process entailed: verifying or challenging the accuracy of the online social survey findings, and filling in the many gaps arising from the survey about the criminal abuse of SGI's, via the application of the Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). In addition, it led to further discussion of issues with SGI's and online offending, which had arisen from the literature review of this thesis, as part of the methodological triangulation process (Denzin, 2012). Finally, it led to the evaluation of officers' vocational experiences with SGI's in the criminal abuse and dissemination of IIOC's, their role in online child grooming and other cyber-crimes such as: cyber-blackmail, sextortion, cyber-

bullying/trolling, revenge porn and cyber-stalking etc. The officers' responses in all these areas, helped significantly to inform the interview schedule for the Stage 3 interviews, and fundamentally contributed to plugging the interstice regarding the criminal abuse of SGI's, that came to light only when the findings from the survey were analysed.

Potential limitations of qualitative interviews

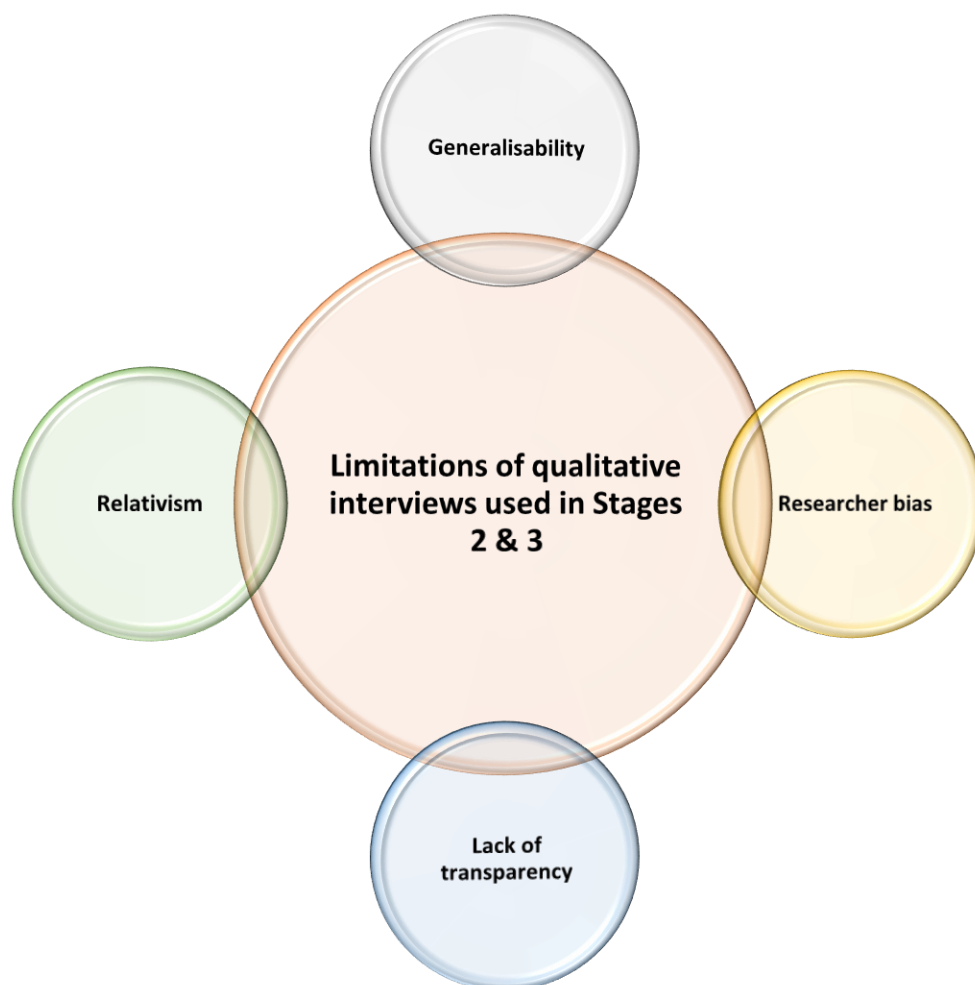


Figure 26 Limitations with qualitative interviews used in Stages 2 & 3

Generalisability

Several criticisms have been levelled generically at qualitative research, and they need to be addressed in the context of their applicability to this current SGI investigation. The first of these is the issue of 'Generalisability'. With only ten interviews in total, conducted during the Stage 2 and 3 fieldworks, to what degree can these mini-case studies of SGI experiences be projected onto any wider population? Qualitative researchers would argue that this is an impossible undertaking, and that such is not their goal at all, which is rather to tease out meanings and understandings from data discovered through the more ethnographic interaction between researcher, and participant. If generalising is to take place in qualitative research, then it should: *'...generalize to theory, rather than to populations'* (Bryman, 2012, p. 406).

Researcher bias

A second major critique of qualitative interviewing is that it is full of researcher bias. Numerous pitfalls can assail the qualitative researcher when interviewing, including: biased prompting of respondents in the interview situation; the failure to accurately record the exact words and meanings of respondents; concerns over the consistency of coding responses to open-ended questions if the responses are then going to be transformed into quantitative data; the biased selection of sections of the data gained to suit the whims and prejudices of the researcher; a biased sample (the dangers of a self-selection sample have been addressed); and finally, a lack of a connection, or state of empathy, between the interviewer and respondent (Oppenheim, 1992). Breakwell flagged up another source of error and bias for the interviewer to be wary of, that of 'acquiescence', whereby respondents simply say 'yes' to all questions, or agree with the prompts provided by the interviewer (Cohen & Marion et al, 2007). One final hazard involving researcher bias also needs discussing, that is the danger of 'confirmation bias', whereby the researcher either deliberately, or inadvertently, seeks the answers that correlate with ideas that they already hold a personal conviction about. When the anticipated responses are furnished they are seized upon, and

highlighted, and when contrary answers are given, these are duly ignored or rejected (Nickerson, 1998). To attempt to counter this, the significance of the data produced on SGI's in this study was designed to be self-explanatory, as far as was humanly possible.

Lack of transparency

An alleged lack of transparency in qualitative research can take two forms. Firstly, starting with the selection of the sample, the reader of qualitative based research papers may be puzzled by the opaque nature of the exact circumstances around the selection of research participants for inclusion in the cohort studied (Bryman, 2012). A second, related issue, concerns when obfuscation by the researcher sometimes impedes the qualitative research process; this can often become discernible during the analysis stage of the research, when specific data is selected and interpreted, while other data is over-looked by the inquirer. For this current SGI inquiry, both the means of sample selection and the modes of analysis, have been fully addressed and the outcomes, in terms of significant findings, will be seen by the reader in the forthcoming chapters.

Relativism

The final criticism of qualitative research, takes us back to the ontological and epistemological roots that lie behind the choice of research method/s to conduct a study. If 'reality' only exists after subjective individual interpretations of meanings and understandings, then the researcher conducting the study must commensurately also be similarly imbued with such notions. If the logic of this argument is authentic, then it would be irrefutable that all the qualitative researchers' data, findings and revelations, could therefore be traduced with the pejorative label of Relativism (Andrews, 2012).

The employment of mixed methods in this SGI investigation, puts this research in a robust, and puissant antithetical stance against the indictment that all qualitative research, is flawed by Relativism. Park and Burgess (1969), the doyens of the Chicago School of research, might not have approved of the quantitative element within the three stages of fieldworks used to achieve its objectives surrounding SGI's, but they would surely have commended the inclusion of more ethnographic research tools in the mix, to help uncover the 'reality' around users SGI experiences.

Potential limitations of using mixed research methods

Failure to mesh the two approaches

One possible problem with the employment of mixed research methods could have arisen from a failure to interlace the quantitative and qualitative fieldwork approaches together advantageously. If they are not efficiently and comprehensively meshed, then the consequences can be fatal for the mixed methods research approaches aims (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Chapters six to eight of this work are arranged in a thematic analysis, blending all three components of the fieldworks along with cross-references to the literature review, to fully exploit the advantages of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2012).

The major/minor flaw

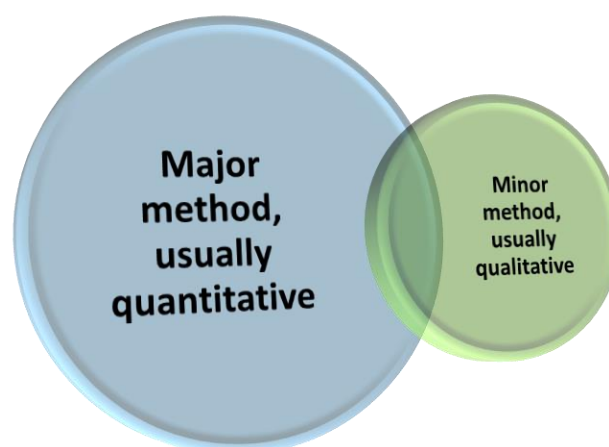


Figure 27 The major/minor flaw in mixed methods research

Another possible deficiency with the use of mixed methods in this SGI study was that the initial survey could have usurped the dominant role, and the latter qualitative ones be relegated to a lesser, tokenistic iteration, to give the veneer of a pluralistic and holistic research approach, without the actual empirical substance to back-up the pronouncements (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). By being aware of this potential danger, this inquirer into SGI's counteracted any drift towards a major/minor discrepancy; both data types were given equal prominence in the forthcoming results/discussion chapters.

Stage 3 interviews: The respondents

One unforeseen hurdle that was overcome in the fieldworks, flowing from the mixed methods approach, was the inability to achieve the initial target of ten active SGI users for the Stage 3 interviews. Nevertheless, despite the problem of the shrinkage of the initial thirty-five volunteers for this process, an excellent spectrum of five demographically diverse interviewees was ultimately obtained, comprising two gay men in their twenties, one bisexual male of a similar age, and two heterosexuals in their early fifties, one of each gender, the process can be seen in [Figure 28](#).

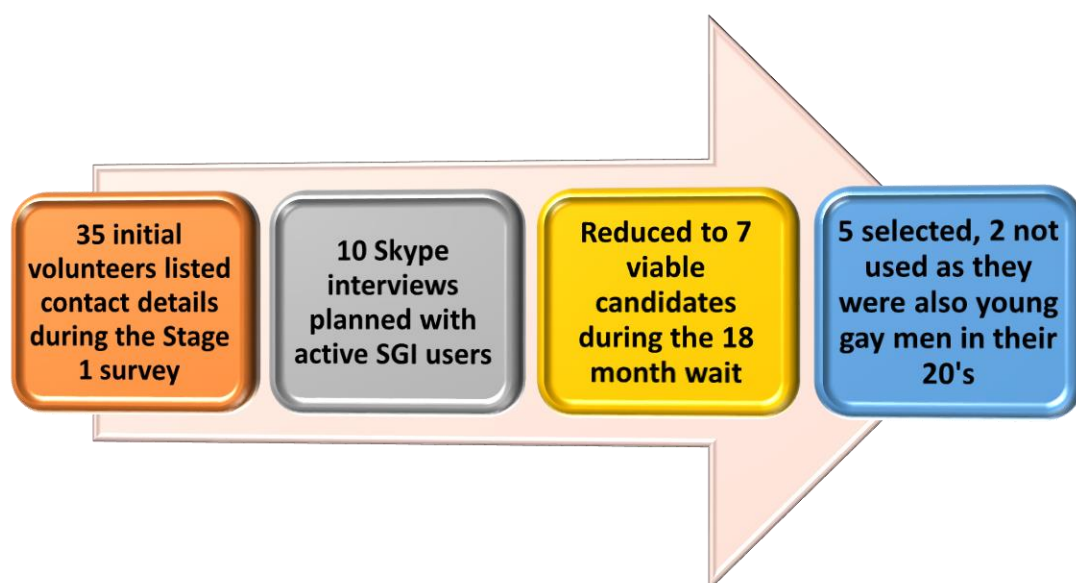


Figure 28 Enrolling the volunteers for the Stage 3 Skype interviews

Methodological completeness

The question of whether rival methods really complement each other, thus endowing the final research findings with greater insightfulness because the sum of the research's individual parts are greater than its separate components is worth considering (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The goal of reaching all-inclusiveness was however, aided by the use of the Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007) to verify and explore issues raised in earlier and different methodologies; through the application of triangulation (Denzin, 2012), which allowed other extant theories and research to be applied in these current fieldworks and finally by the exploitation of relevant elements of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Methodological offsetting

An erroneous conviction often exists that using both a quantitative and qualitative, approach in the same study will not actually complement each other, but rather offset the other's weaknesses (Bryman, 2012). This SGI study did not follow such a conviction because of its adoption of the pragmatic worldview (Creswell, 2009), the central concern was developing a 'what works best' approach, which proved to be a mixed methods strategy to achieve the inquiry's stated research objectives.

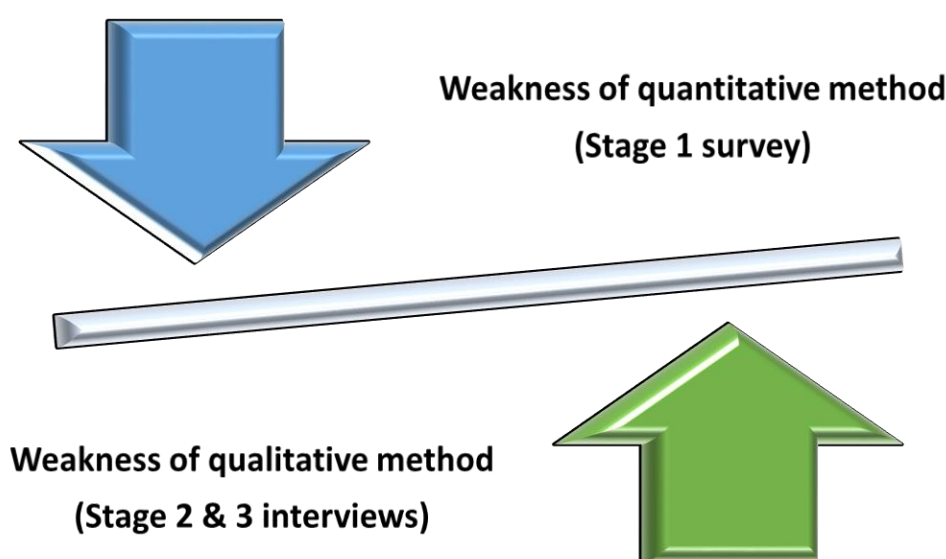


Figure 29 Methodological offsetting & this SGI mixed research methods investigation

Confirmation bias

The potential negative impact of ‘confirmation biases’ was raised earlier, as a critique of qualitative research methods, on page 163 of this chapter, but are equally applicable to mixed research methods. To reiterate, the researcher strove to maintain a neutral stance in the data collection and analysis, letting the findings speak for themselves despite an already declared personal affiliation to libertarianism.

Practical considerations

Figure 30 clearly demonstrates the five main practical issues which influenced the conduct and execution of the stages of fieldwork for this study. The time available, financial costs, and ethical requirements, all had powerful effects on the choice of a mixed method strategy, the specific approaches employed and the time span of the venture.

A Gantt chart¹⁷, formulated for the Transfer Panel of the PhD, proved highly useful in managing the project’s goal: to submit the written thesis by January 2017.

¹⁷ See Appendix 2



Figure 30 Practical considerations for this SGI investigation

Rationale for the interviews in Stage 2

It has already been stated that the Stage 2 interviews with SOECA officers, were a crucial conduit between the online survey and the interviews with active SGI users. The exploration of any possible links between SGI's and online CSA, child grooming and IloC's, comprised an important element in evaluating one of the main aims of this study, namely assessing the harms which they can cause to children, adults and to society.

The findings of the survey, in relation to the extent of material that SGI users had negative experiences with, were verified against these five SOECA officers' professional experiences with the online criminal abuse of such images. This entailed filling in a large knowledge aperture, as most of the active SGI users had little or no experiences with any dark-sides, in their usage. Several areas were also explored including the degree to which SGI's may become a gateway, leading people on to more serious offending with CSA, online child grooming or IloC's. Without the Stage

2 interviews, a major element of the study's research aims would have not been achieved, critically undermining the data quality of any findings in terms of their validity. Whereas the researcher had expected the SOECA officers to be confirming findings, it transpired that they were filling in profound gaps revealed by many SGI users' experiences.

Rationale for the Skype interviews in Stage 3

Figure 31 on the next page provides a compact rationale for selecting Skype video interviews to carry out the Stage 3 fieldwork.

Firstly, Skype significantly enhanced the anonymity and confidentiality of interviewees. The researcher never learned the real names, or any other personal identifying characteristics of any of the five participants.

Secondly, an issue raised earlier in the ethics section of this chapter was that Skype reinforced the health, safety and security of both respondents and researcher. Without physical contact, risks to both parties were appreciably lessened.

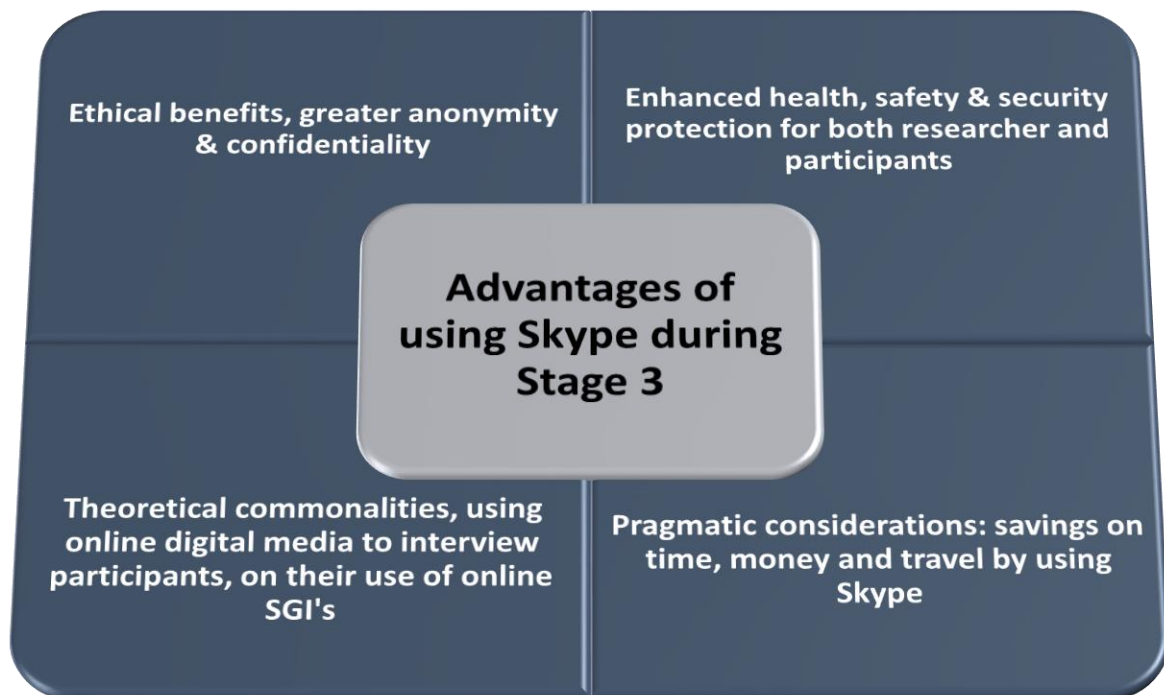


Figure 31 The advantages of using Skype to conduct the Stage 3 interviews

Thirdly, to conduct these interviews face-to-face, the researcher would have had to travel to the geographical location of the respondent, requiring the allocation of considerable time; public transport issues; travel-costs; and in addition, a potentially last minute cancellation en route, or a participant no-show, after arriving at the rendezvous location. Also, one of the five interviewees had moved to New York from London since completing the survey, and so this would have necessitated jetting to the US to conduct the interview.

Furthermore, there was a theoretical deliberation that the most apposite means of enhancing the connection between respondents and researcher on SGI's, was to appropriate the very online tools that the interviewees used when engaging with their amateur pornography. Hence, the Stage 3 Skype mechanism for collecting primary data for this study shared some commonalities with the subject under investigation,

and therefore the resonances between the two led to far greater discoveries and insights than might otherwise have been possible. Succinctly put, the means of investigation mirrored the process being studied, to the greater benefit of the overall data quality.

As a counterbalance to these four benefits of employing Skype, the work of 1960's non-verbal communications guru, Albert Mehrabian (2007), is certainly worth applying to this fieldwork. Mehrabian asserted that only a small part of the comprehension of spoken words derives from the meanings of the prose. Rather, the greater part of understanding is elicited from: the tone, inflection, mode of how words are uttered, and from the facial expressions of the orator. Without the physical presence of the research interlocutor, how much accurate comprehension of what participants were saying and intimating, could have been lost? Ultimately, most of the Skype interviews quickly switched to audio only as the video signals quality proved inadequate for the task.

However, no research tool is entirely perfect, and all contain some imperfections; for these SGI's active users' Stage 3 interviews, the benefits of conducting them via Skype, on balance far outweighed the disadvantages.

How was the data analysed?

The results of both univariate and bivariate analysis of variables, conducted in SPSS, have been predominantly presented, as appropriate, in the forms of frequency tables, graphs and charts in the following three results/discussion chapters. Tests for the statistical significance of any variable correlations were conducted using Pearson Chi Square Tests, and the results of these included in the analysis. They are accompanied by textual interpretations and evaluation of their connotations for the aims of this study. Some of the data are incorporated straight into the prose text to avoid excessive use of graphical representations. All the three results chapters which follow are presented thematically, and all the findings combined to provide a more sophisticated and nuanced analysis of the study's SGI findings, rather than using a more superficial, narrative/chronological approach.

Figure 32 on the next page, is a flow-chart of the data analysis processes used in this work.

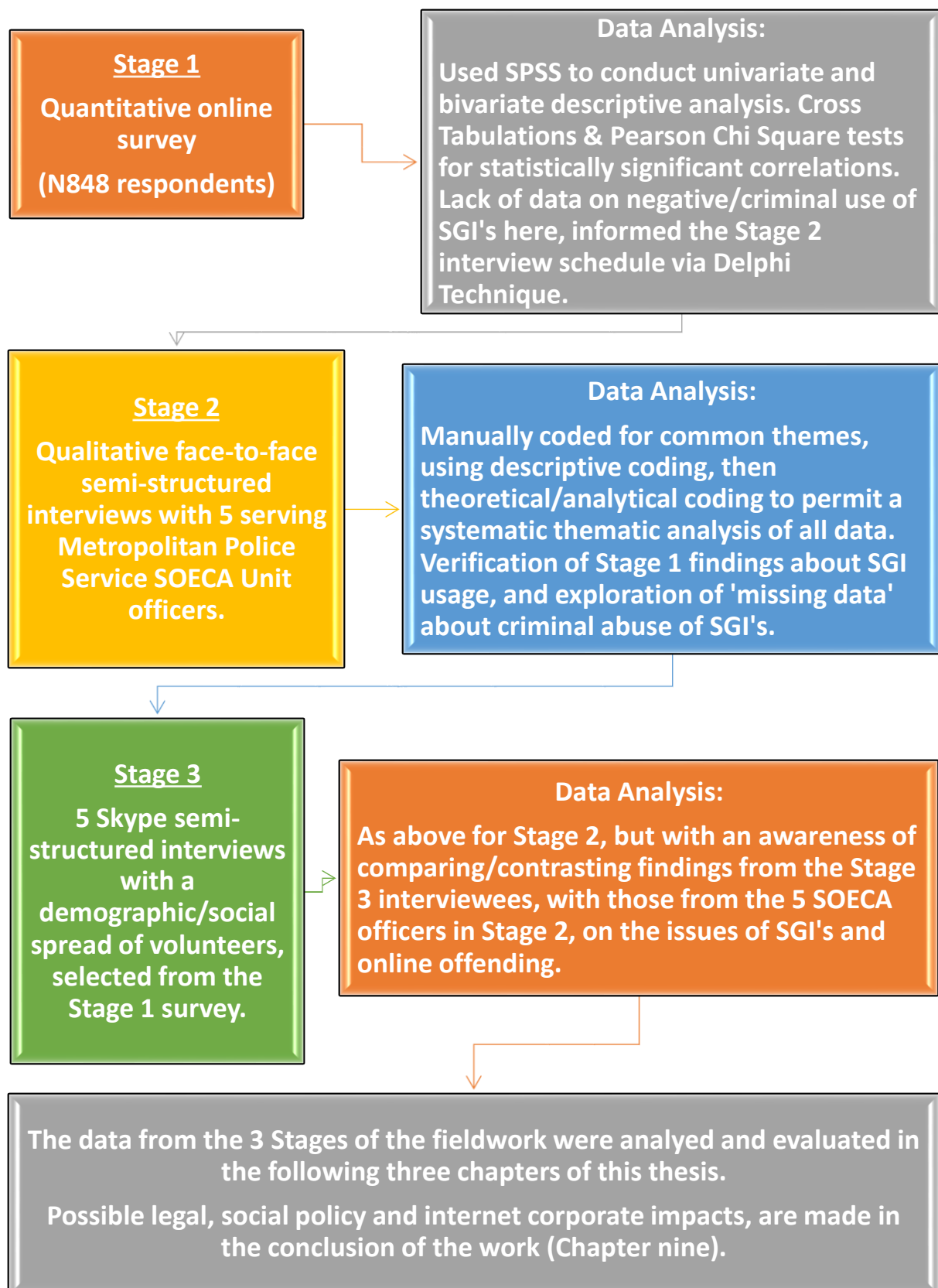


Figure 32 How was all the data collected and analysed?

With a total of ten interviews having taken place, the coding of open-ended question responses into common themes took place manually without the need for NVivo. The number of participants was quite manageable without it, as it is more suitable for the coding and analysis of data from large numbers of interviewees. An initial descriptive coding of the material took place, to scope out which findings were present. This was followed by a theoretical/analytical coding process where common themes and dissonances were sought. The Delphi Technique was always present in the analysis process to keep verifying the data, and to identify significant gaps in findings which needed further addressing in the latter stages of the research: e.g. the lack of any real data/experiences with the negative and criminal use of SGI's among the survey sample (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Methodological triangulation was also used constantly in the analysis, bringing in existing secondary research and studies, and combining it with the findings from both the survey and the interviews (Denzin, 2012). So, for example, IWF (2015) data on SGI's, that were also IloC's, could be considered against the experiences of the five SOECA officers in their line of duty, and the findings from the active SGI users in Stages 1 and 3. A systematic analysis of comparisons/contrasts, but also significant data gaps in the qualitative data, allowed for a detailed thematic scrutiny of these SGI data (May, 2011). During the systematic thematic analysis, the ability to employ elements of Grounded Theory was an invaluable tool (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), for example, when Brian McNair (2013), argued from a cultural studies perspective that online pornography is a great force for promoting human rights, equal opportunities, diversity and anti-discrimination in modern western liberal societies, resulting in a more civilized and fair society for its citizens. McNair has no empirical proof for this assertion, apart from circumstantial evidence that in those societies with easy access to online pornography, human rights were more progressed, and vice-a-versa, where not. This SGI research was able put McNair's avowal to the test, and show that for the clear majority of active SGI users, pleasure and sexual satisfaction are indeed the predominant experiences. However, for a minority, the freedom to access and make amateur online pornography is an

extreme hazard, often leading to their becoming the victims of criminal abuse by online offenders. Greater equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and freedom to access online SGI's/pornography, is twinned with a commensurate rise in the perils for a minority, particularly children.

One danger that existed in the data analysis, was of falling into the trap of just using sentiments that occur frequently in the coding process, as this would potentially ignore vital, antagonistic opinions that contradicted what most interviewees were expressing (Creswell, 2013). Such a peril was avoided by being mindful of the issue in advance of the coding process, and by specifically incorporating countervailing sentiments into the analysis procedure. To illustrate, Officer 1, during the SOECA interviews, provided a constant counterpoint to the remaining officers interviewed. These other four officers were more liberal in their attitudes regarding the use of, and access to, adult, legal, online pornography/SGI's, and in their views about its censorship by government. Officer 1, in contrast, proved to be a contrarian with this consensus among his professional colleagues.

The samples in the three stages of the fieldwork

The Stage 1 online survey

The following tables and charts show the demographic and personal characteristics of these N603 respondents who provided valid forms. The first nine questions (of thirty-five)¹⁸, were all compulsory, and related to the establishment of their demographic/social characteristics¹⁹.

¹⁸ Refer to Appendix 3 for the full survey

¹⁹ As most of the questions on the survey were not compulsory to answer, this had the consequence that responses often do not total N603; especially following Q23 which was mandatory and which filtered out 218 participants of the total sample (36.6%), who had not engaged with online pornography in the last six months.

The ages of Stage 1 sample respondents can be viewed in [Chart 1](#).

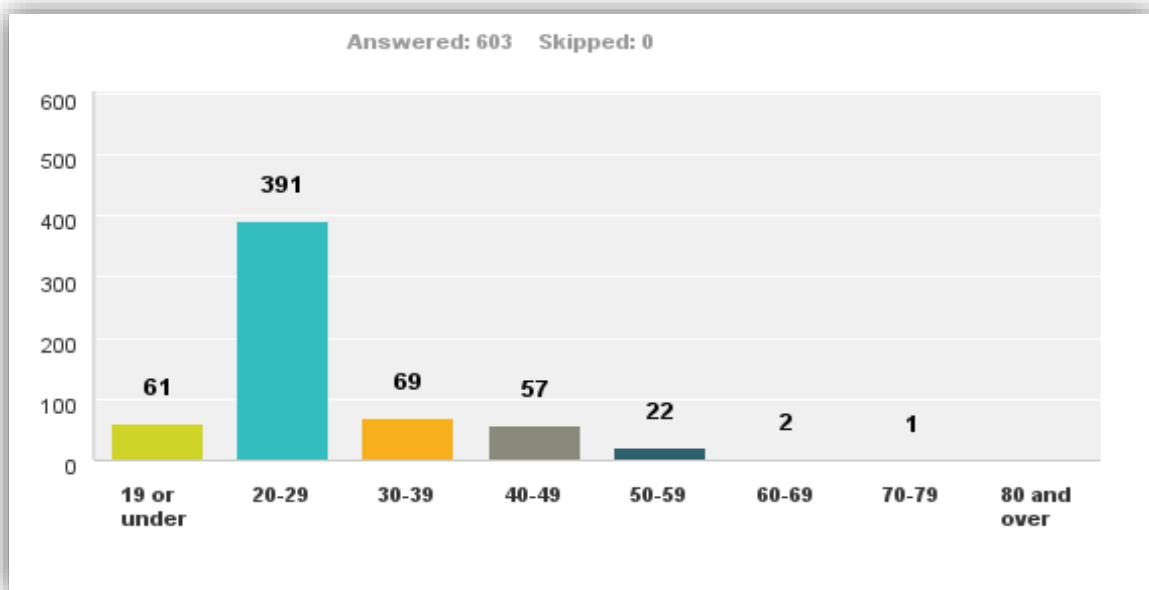


Chart 1 Age of respondents

By far the largest group were the 20-29yo's at 64.8% (391/603) of respondents. This reflects the large number of students encountered by the researcher as a FT PhD student. However, as one of the largest users of online pornography are the younger age ranges of 18-39, see [Table 1](#), this gave a great insight into how they both engaged with, and felt about SGI's.

The gender balance of the respondents is shown in [Chart 2](#).

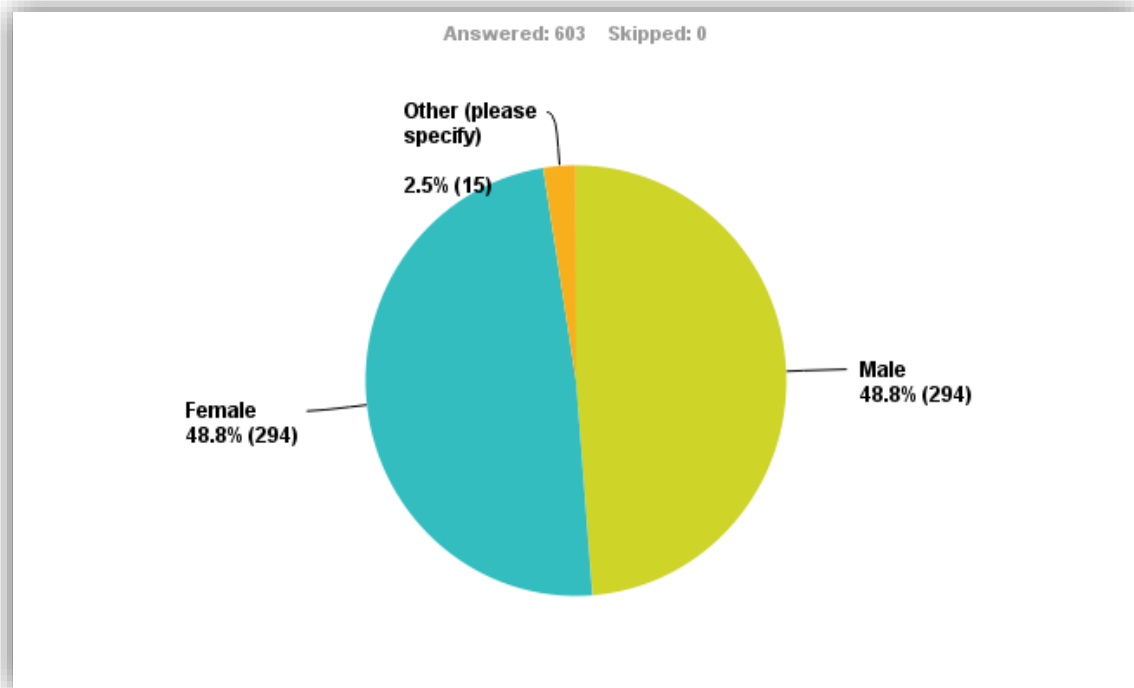


Chart 2 Gender of respondents

A completely even split between those who identified as male and female (294/294) was produced. Interestingly, fifteen of the respondents (2.5%) selected the non-binary 'other' option, possibly reflecting the increasing media attention being paid to Transgender issues and rights in western society today, as evidenced by the recent film, 'The Danish Girl' (2015), or the federal/state legal battles over transgender 'choice' of public toilet use in US state of North Carolina (Teague, 2016). Unfortunately, the fifteen non-binary respondents were too few to be worth including in many of the gender crosstabs conducted during the analysis process.

The sexuality of the sample is displayed in [Chart 3](#).

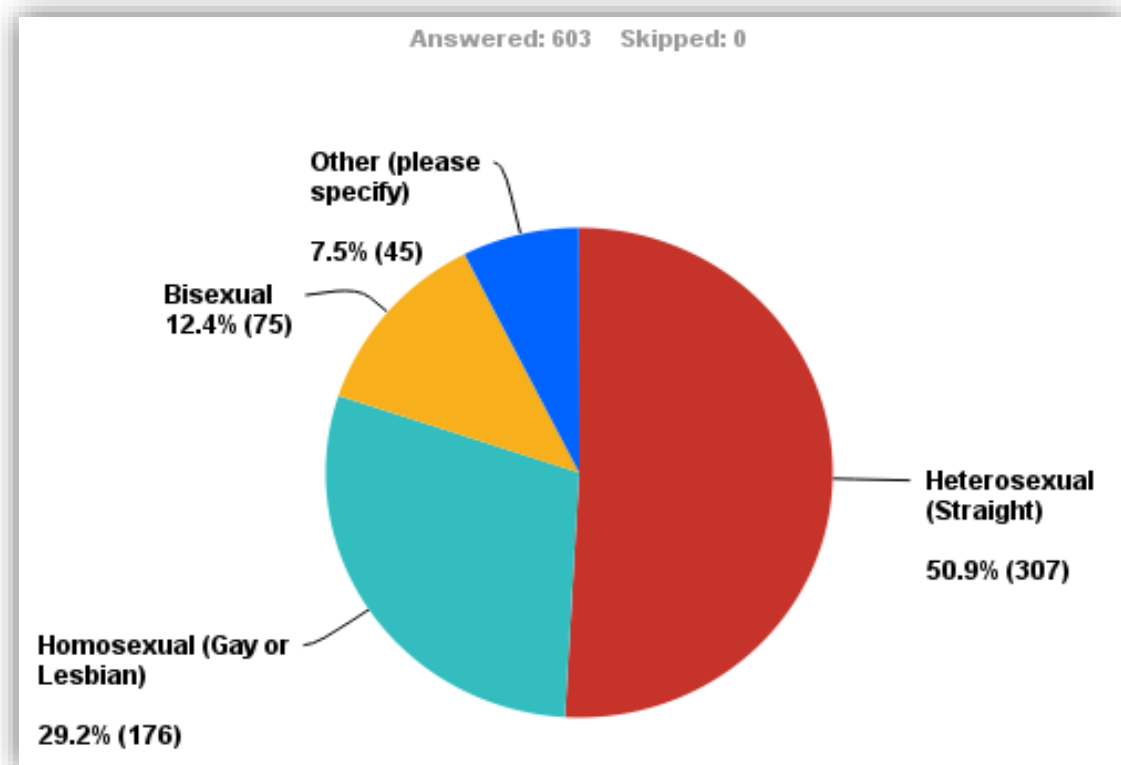


Chart 3 Sexuality of the entire Stage 1 sample

The large number of homosexual (176/603 - 29.2%) and bisexual (75/603 - 12.4%) respondents in the sample, compared to an average population, reflects both the researcher's extensive contacts among the LGBT community, and the greater willingness for members of these groups to come forward and participate in historical sexual research (Jones, 2004; Masters & Johnson, 1988).

Stonewall, the gay charity, have estimated the real proportion of LGBT's in the UK to be between 5% and 7% (Chalabi, 2013).

The ethnic backgrounds of those who took part in the survey, displayed in [Chart 4](#), revealed double the number of non-whites in the sample (28% - 169/603) than in the population of England and Wales, at 14% (ons, 2015), undoubtedly reflecting the large number of international students who study at this country's HE institutions; they comprised 19% of all UK students in 2014-15 (UKCISA, 2016).

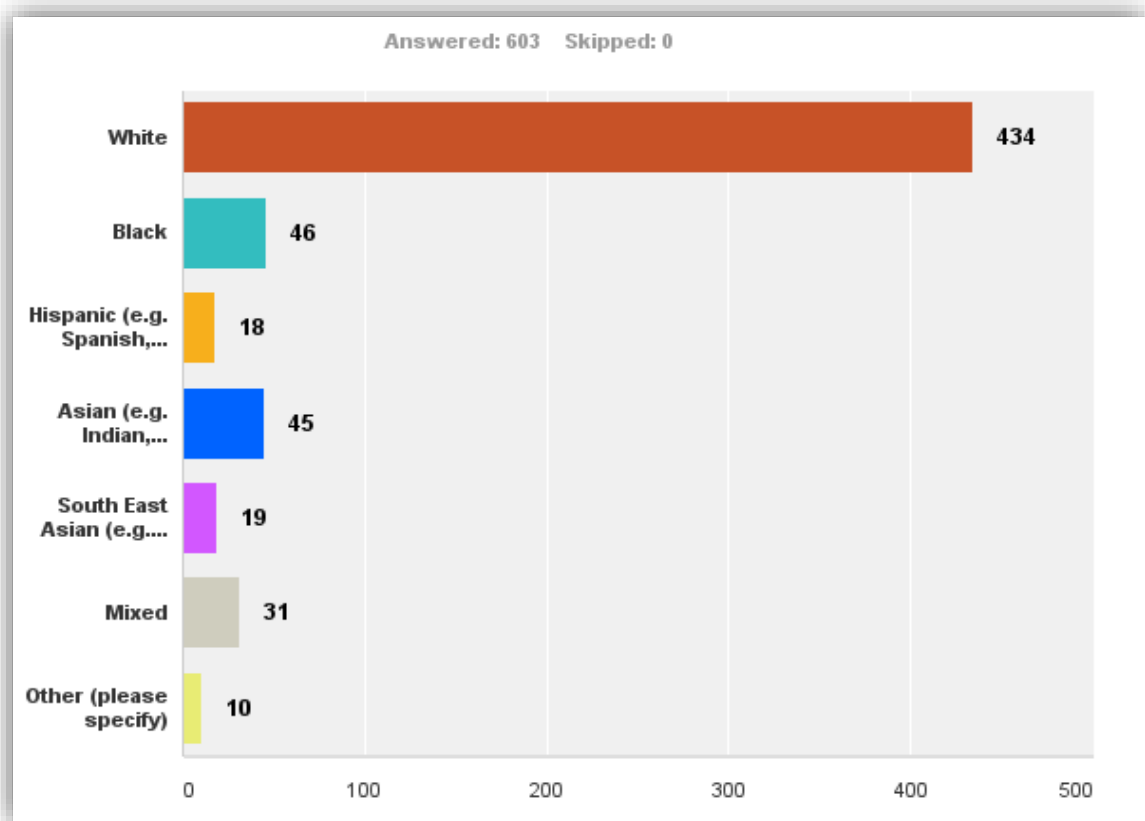


Chart 4 Ethnicity of the entire Stage 1 sample

The occupations of the sample, seen in [Chart 5](#), again reflect the large numbers of students, with that category forming 58.9% (355/603) of respondents.

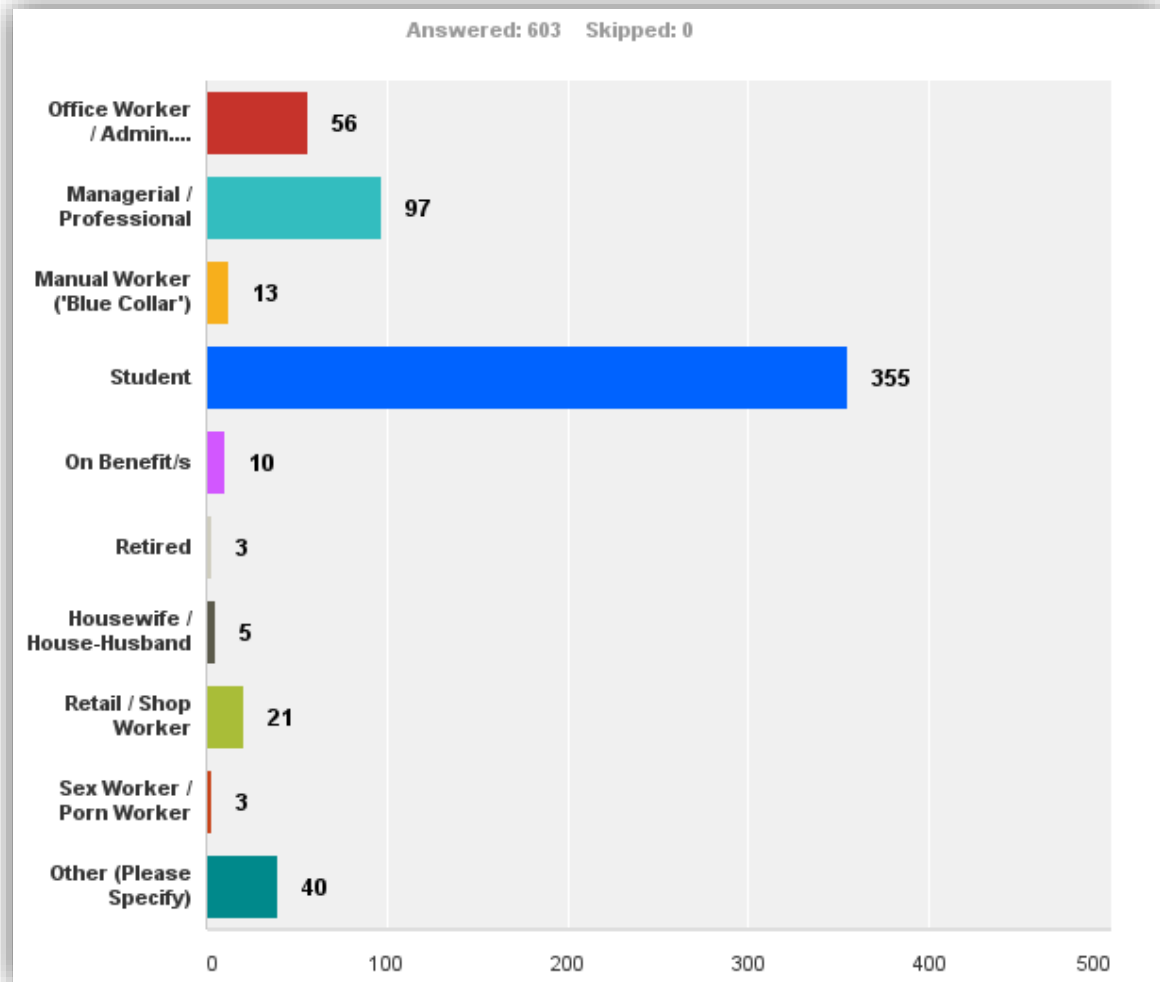


Chart 5 Occupations of the entire Stage 1 sample

Chart 6 revealed that 80.8% (487/603) of the sample were in the UK.

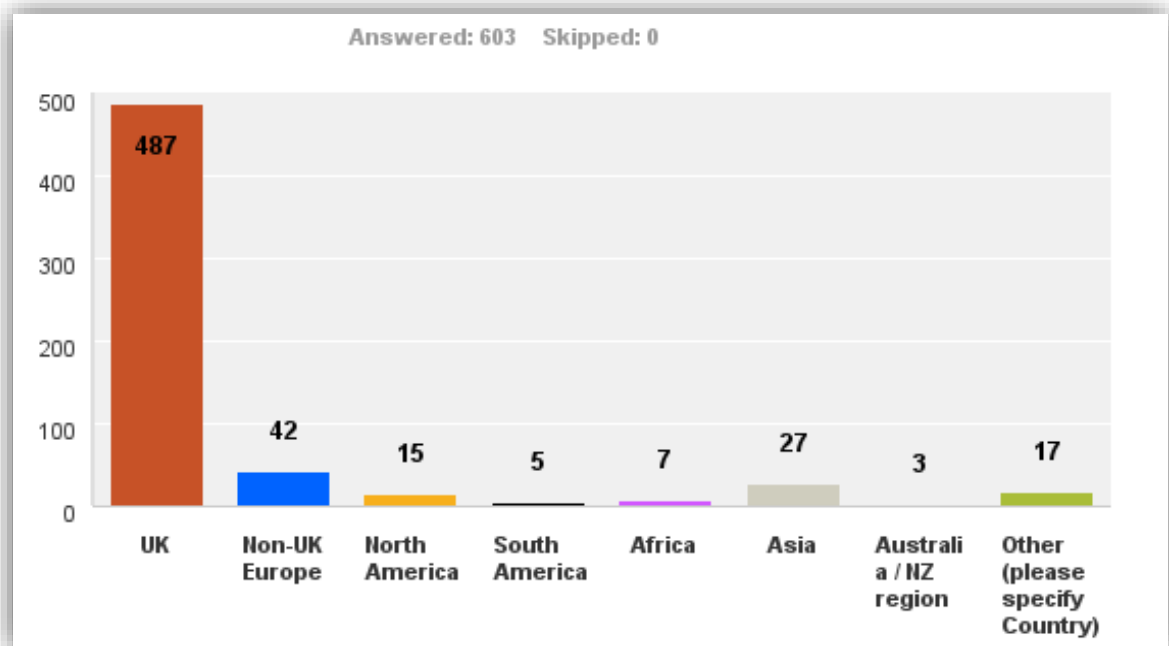


Chart 6 Geographical location of the entire Stage 1 sample

With 50.1% (302/603) of respondents in the whole sample declaring themselves to be single, see [Chart 7](#), there existed an equitable balance between the singles, and those involved in different types of relationships.

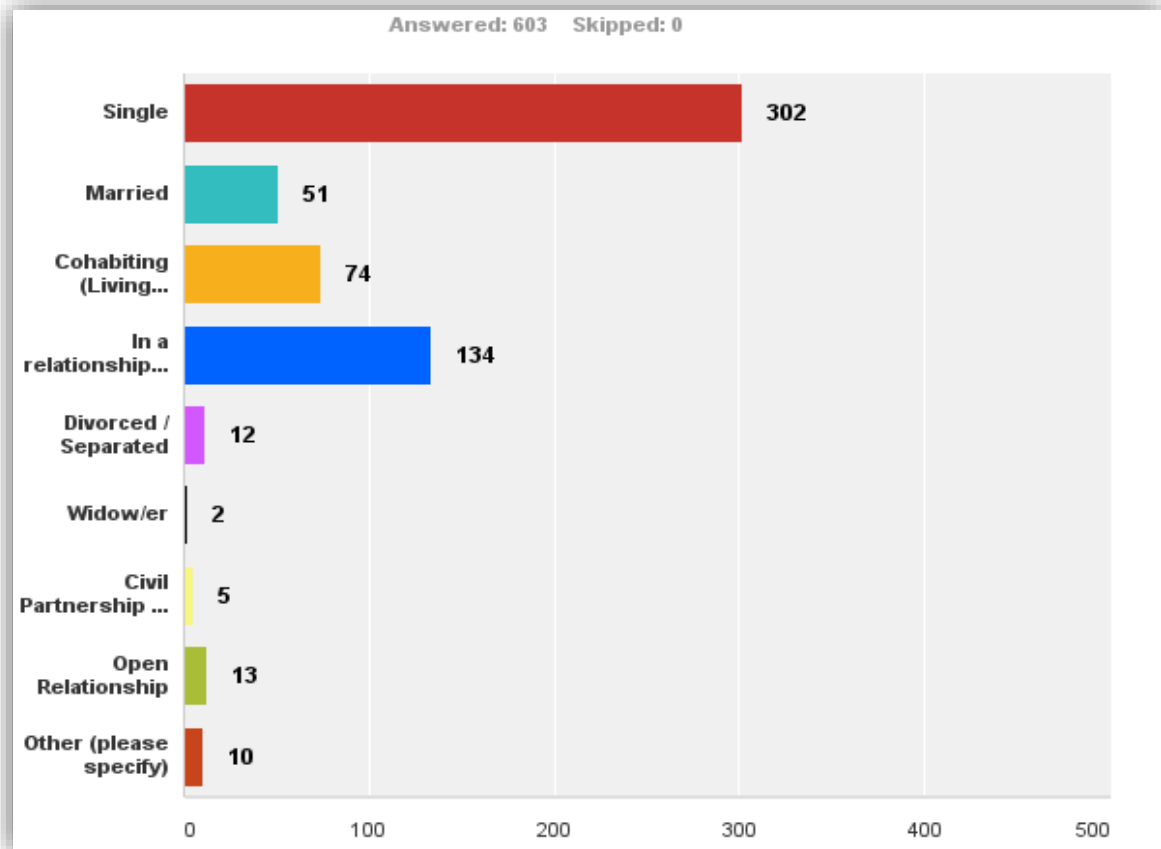


Chart 7 Relationship status of the entire Stage 1 sample

[Chart 7](#)'s data had the consequence that only the top four categories had sufficient numbers that could warrant analysis.

The final variable of the survey's respondents concerned which religion (if any) they identified with. Most respondents (56.7% - 342/603), declared that they had 'no religion', per [Chart 8](#).

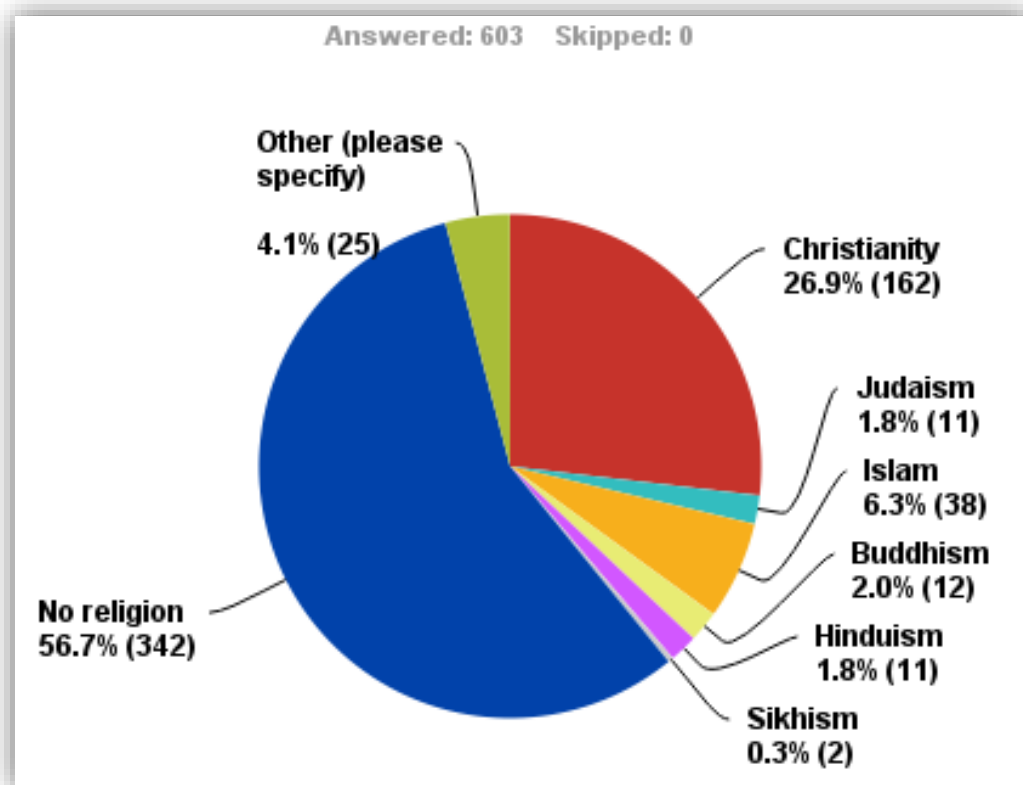


Chart 8 Religion of the entire Stage 1 sample

The datum for Christians in [Chart 8](#) (26.9% - 162/603) differs from those findings produced by the Pew Research Centre (Wyatt, 2015), which revealed that 64% of the UK population identified themselves as Christian in 2010.

The Stage 2 face-to-face interviews with five SOECA officers

The five officers who participated in the Stage 2 fieldwork came from within the SOECA Command, of the London MPS.

Four male officers and one female took part, reflecting the gender balance within the whole team.

All participants had at least three years' proficiency in working with online child sex offenders, and some had more than a decade of vocational expertise in the role. This was crucial, as they had all experienced the rapid recent growth of SGI's in general, and their subsequent abuse by online offenders.

Henceforth, the five serving MPS officers will be identified as:

Officer 1 - Male

Officer 2 - Female

Officer 3 - Male

Officer 4 - Male

Officer 5 – Male

The Stage 3 Skype interviews with five active SGI users

Some thirty-five respondents from the survey indicated that they would be prepared to participate in Stage 3.

The five chosen participants for Stage 3 comprised an excellent demographic spread, although a lesbian interviewee would have been a great benefit.

Henceforth, the five active SGI users from the Stage 3 interviews will be identified as:

Jack – Gay male, late-twenties

Harry – Gay male, late-twenties

Cathy – Straight female, early-fifties

Dave – Straight male, mid-fifties

Oliver – Bisexual male, late-twenties

Conclusions

This chapter has explained many aspects of the three-stage mixed research methods strategy, used to achieve its objectives for exploration of SGI's. This has entailed the practical elements of: when, where, with whom, and the number of respondents participating in the different stages of the fieldwork.

The adopted research strategy was believed to be the most practical for the goal of unearthing findings about SGI use, due to its stationing within the pragmatic worldview approach to research. Furthermore, its chosen mixed methods strategy was also evaluated in terms of the abstract philosophical concepts of ontology, epistemology, research paradigms and axiology. The adopted strategy found itself at odds with the simplistic binary standpoints of many of these concepts; instead pursuing a third way, which rejected the dead-hand constraints of the philosophers of knowledge and science/social research, and their dogmatic endorsement of only the 'approved' means of collecting evidence.

A comprehensive analysis of the ethical measures taken to ensure that the primary fieldwork into SGI's complied with the highest standards for social research, embodied by the ESRC's (2012) six-point summary, was also made.

Methodological triangulation and the Delphi Technique were acknowledged as having played a significant role in both the execution of each stage of the SGI fieldwork, and in the analysis of data produced. Grounded Theory too, contributed to this process.

An extensive discussion of the many strengths and weaknesses of all three of the stages in the fieldwork took place, and it was acknowledged that each method employed had some limitations, but these were, in each individual case, outweighed by the benefits that they brought towards the pursuits of the investigation's SGI objectives.

The data analysis procedures for all three research stages were also scrutinized, so that readers could be cogent about how precisely the interpretations of findings generated on SGI's, were reached.

The chapter concluded with an overview and evaluation of the nature of the samples of participants in all three fieldwork stages.

The thesis now proceeds to its primary data findings on SGI's, and an analysis/evaluation of them in terms of meeting the study's main objectives, which are, once again: to determine how extensively, and in what manner, are SGI's being used by individuals online, and whether these pursuits are having a positive or negative impact on them and society?

Chapter 6

SGL's: taxonomy, metrics & attitudes towards

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings from the three primary research fieldwork stages in relation to the stated aims of this SGL investigation. These findings were analysed thematically, combining quantitative and qualitative primary data, in the goal of helping to answer the main research questions of the study. These were to discover the extent of SGL usage among online users, the nature of that usage, and the positive or negative impacts, both for individual users and for society.

This overarching aim has been divided into three results/discussion chapters for manageability. The first of these chapters (six), lays out three significant findings for the study's research objectives. They are:

Firstly, the major types of SGL's discovered will be revealed. Secondly, the extent of SGL usage among a large sample of online users will be divulged, and the different modes of interaction, examined. Finally, the attitudes towards SGL's of a range of different groups will be discussed: general online users, active SGL users, and specialist law-enforcement officers who deal with the criminal abuse of SGL's.

Taxonomy of the main types of SGI's

The data from the three stages of the fieldwork in this investigation have revealed that the term SGI's can be broken-down into six main categories, although readers should note that some images do cross-over into multiple categories.



Figure 33 The six significant types of SGI's uncovered

SGI's used on hooking-up apps

These SGI's are predominantly, but not exclusively, erotic and sexual still images, rather than video or moving ones. Such use is far more prevalent among gay men and bisexuals, rather than heterosexuals, and their function is often to arrange imminent sexual encounters (hook-ups), or social rendezvous, which will often rapidly lead to a sexual outcome.

Chart 9 from Stage 1, shows how much more pronounced general online pornography use is among LGBT's; 46.7% (141/550) of heterosexuals had used online pornography/SGI's in the last six months, as compared to 85% (147/550) of homosexuals, and 78.7% (59/550) of bisexuals.

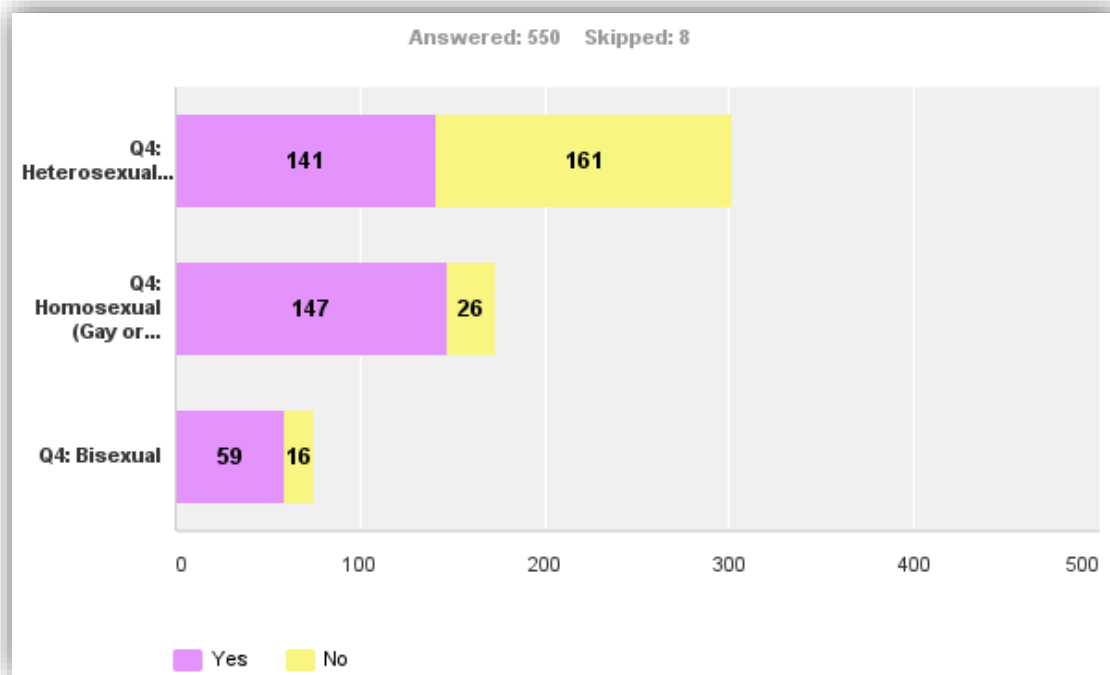


Chart 9 Crosstab of online pornography use (last six months) and sexuality

This finding was confirmed by Jack in the Stage 3 interviews, who spoke about exchanging SGI's on gay hooking-up apps like Grindr, etc.:

"It's normative, its pervasive, its normal, it's what would be expected, and if you didn't have, it could be a deal-breaker to continue talking or progressing on to meeting someone, so you are supposed to have some of this, maybe not featuring your...face and genitals...in the same document or archive. As say you would send a dick pic, then a separate picture of your face or your body..."

SGI's on pornographic Tube websites

The survey demonstrated that viewing SGI's on the PornTube sites, was the most popular category for people consuming online images. It was revealed in [Chart 10](#) that 61.2% (194/317) of active SGI users had used this platform in the last six months.

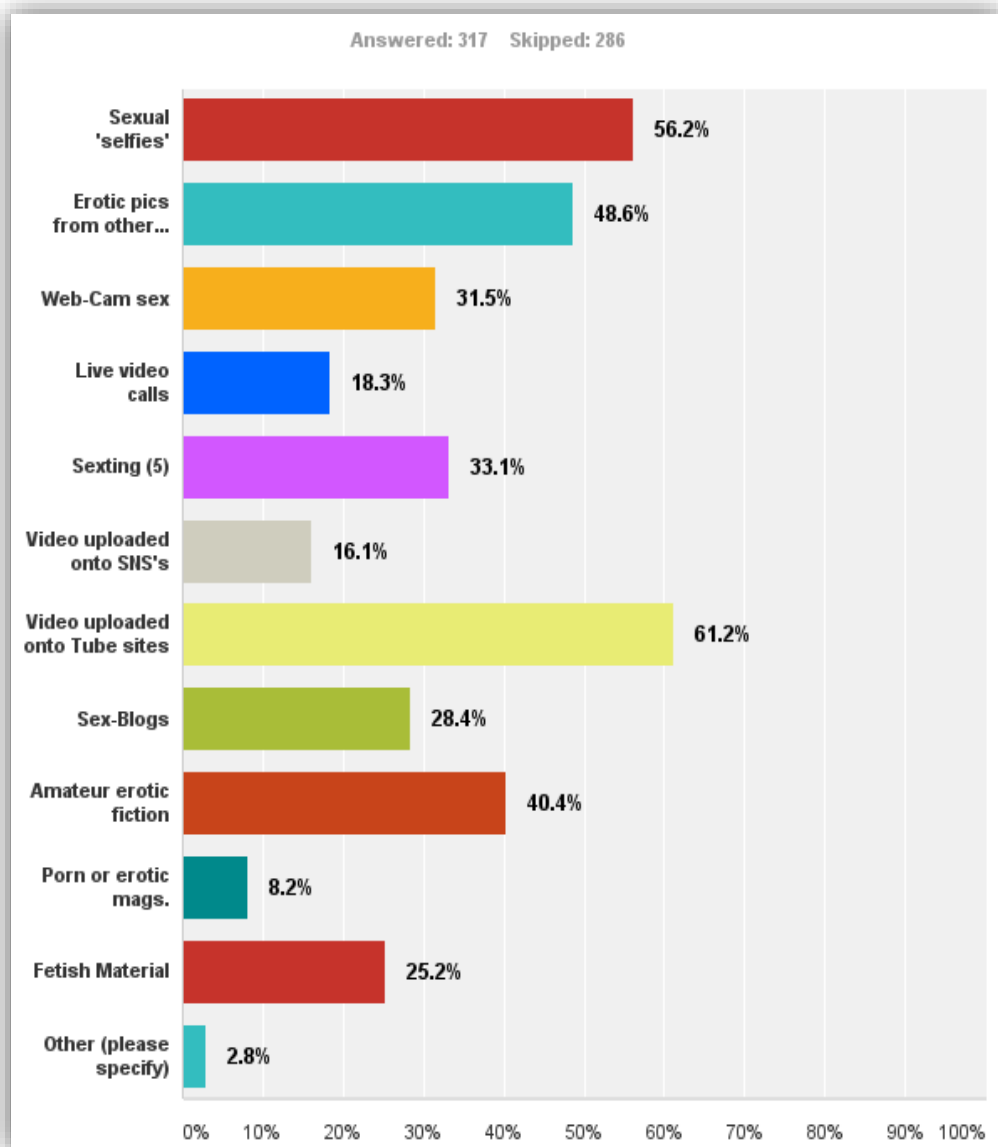


Chart 10 Types of SGI's encountered online in the last six months

A plethora of websites of this category exist, many under the umbrella of one massive commercial organisation, the Pornhub Network (i.e. 'Porntube, RedTube, Xtube' and 'YouPorn' etc.), but numerous others exist too, such as 'Xhamster' etc. A variety of revenue streams generate money for their site owners: charging advertisers for pop-

ups; persuading website visitors to pay for full-length movies after experiencing clips gratis; or getting customers to sign-up to monthly recurring direct debits (DD's) for premium services, which are advertisement-free, and feature exclusive material with access to VIP 'members only' areas. A final monetisation scheme comes from uploaders of SGI movie clips, who can earn a small fee from each download; revenues are divided evenly between the site host, and the SGI's creator/uploader. Four of the five interviewees during Stage 3 had seen SGI's on the PornTubes, the only exception being Cathy. The two gay men in Stage 3 mostly engaged with SGI's on hooking-up sites, not the PornTubes. Straight Dave described an experience on a PornTube website:

"There's one called Fake Cab Driver...they get a woman in there who they reckon they pay ten quid for to do something...and they film the women doing things...allegedly. Sometimes it can be quite interesting when the woman says take your knickers off and I'll give you twenty quid, then eventually it leads to something more and more. That is the closest I've got, the person is supposedly an amateur, you know who haven't really prepared for it...and I think if you want to see the whole thing you have to pay, because they tend to be succinct...they give you a teaser".

Despite four of the Stage 3 interviewees having seen SGI's on PornTubes, none had created their own movie clip, and uploaded it to one. It explains why many have seen SGI's, but far fewer have created them, as just one movie clip upload could be viewed by streaming, or downloading by a multitudinous audience of online Tube site-visitors. This has also contributed to the existence of a perception-distortion, where many believes that most young people are creating and sexting SGI's.

SGI selfies used in sexting

Two main sources exist for the SGI selfie. Firstly, those taken by people, including (illegally) older children in relationships, who send naked, or semi-naked, images of themselves to their youthful partners. Such images are frequently stills, but could be movie clips. Ostensibly, they are created voluntarily by one or both parties, and sent of their own volition. However, particularly for adolescents, the issue of peer-pressure and partner-coercion in online SGI transactions, needs to be carefully considered. Research discussed in the literature review revealed that 60% of such 'privately' traded SGI sexts are eventually revealed, to one or more other person, often online (Bowlin, 2013). The sexting of SGI's plays an instrumental part in the recently criminalised named offence of revenge porn in England and Wales²⁰, when the images have been uploaded later onto a revenge porn website by a vengeful and scorned ex-partner.

The second main source of the sexualised selfie, is those who take them themselves, then usually post them voluntarily on their SNS's, or send them to online contacts, either known personally, or only met online. Although many images are still, some are also movie clips recorded on laptop web-cameras as part of the 'webwank' process, or alternatively taken on smartphones. This voluntary transactional process, can swiftly escalate to become coercive and criminal, if image makers end up in a blackmail or sextortion predicament with one of their online contacts, to whom they sent the SGI. Victims may have been duped into sending the image, believing they were exchanging with another teenager, rather than a predatory online paedophilic offender. The case of Canadian sextortion victim Amanda Todd, is the most infamous and tragic example of this, and it will be returned to in the forthcoming chapter eight of this thesis (APVancouver, 2014).

²⁰ In February 2015 under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act

The survey revealed that, of the 317 active SGI users, 26.5% (84/317) had created and sent online, a sexualised image of themselves, see [Chart 11](#).

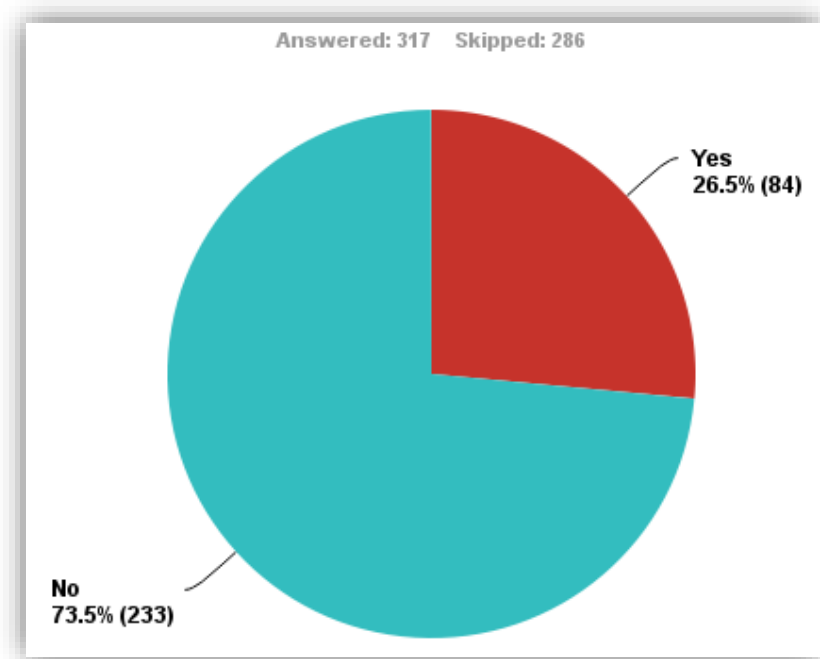


Chart 11 Have you ever made, uploaded or distributed any SGI's in the last six months?

Most of the SGI's sent were not movie clips, but rather sexual still selfies as part of the sexting process. Both gay men in the Stage 3 interviews, were heavy, still-image sexters on hooking-up apps. Two of the other interviewees had created still SGI's, and sent them online, although infrequently. Gay Harry explained his use of SGI's:

"I have numerously taken pictures of myself and sent them to numerous people, and I've also received a wide-range of pictures on my mobile phone. It's mainly hook-ups and dating sites, for the purpose of finding out, or assessing the level of attraction between the two of us, or three of us."

When asked about the type of SGI images sent to other gay men, via hooking-up apps, he elaborated:

"The whole range, they were always naked, and my face not always included, just my body..." (Harry).

These sometimes-included pictures of his erect penis.

Webcam produced SGI's for camsex

One of the largest sources of SGI material is the laptop webcam, which were the source of a massive 89.9% of 3,803 sexualised images of children found on third party 'parasitic' websites (Internet Watch Foundation, 2015). However, smartphones, with their ever-improving digital cameras, are rapidly eroding the laptop webcam's SGI creation ascendancy. Webcam SGI's are usually movie clips, although still images may also be captured from these; they have a plethora of origins: commercial 'Cam' pornography sites for example, where a lone performer reacts to keyboard prompts from paying viewers whose CC details have been entered, and a typical thirty minutes of action purchased. These performers may either operate alone from home, or from a commercial studio where a small unit is hired, and which receives a proportion of the revenues generated. Sometimes, cam-performers can be domiciled in locations beyond the jurisprudence of western governments, and may belong to organised cyber-criminal enterprises, featuring children under eighteen.

Webcam SGI's can also be generated as part of the sexualised sexting/selfies process, outlined in the previous section. They can be mutually and voluntarily sent between partners for private titillation. Also, they can be shared with online contacts, who may be friends or online contacts only. [Chart 10](#) demonstrated that webcam origin SGI's had been seen by 31.5% of the 317 active SGI users in Stage 1, while those engaging in the similar Skype pornographic video links, had been seen/used by a further 18.3%, most undoubtedly conducted on laptop webcams. The apps 'Chatroulette' and 'Omegle' are an important source of such material, as are SNS's and messaging/image apps (like WhatsApp and Snapchat), where images and video can be shared via direct messages, or via going into private one-to-one chatrooms and establishing a Skype video link. The work of the MPS's SOECA unit, revealed in the Stage 2 interviews, often involves posing as children in such online venues, without video for obvious reasons, in an attempt try and catch and convict online CSA perpetrators. Such offenders frequently pose as teenagers and send stolen SGI/IloC's as part of their criminal endeavours to entice reciprocal images out of their victims, in an abusive and

illicit exchange. Some are contact offenders who are committing the sexual offence of child grooming in the UK, preparing the way for an eventual meeting with their victim, in contravention of the 2003 Sexual Offences Act (cps.gov.uk, nd).

Officer 1 related the following case, illustrating how webcam SGI's can be exploited by online criminals:

"An example of an adult victim I'm aware of...the suspect goes onto a gay website, on the site he pretends to be thirteen-year-old boy, talks to adult men, they webcam to him something inappropriate, masturbate on a webcam, and then, the following day, obviously, the same suspect...then goes into the same guy as the father of the thirteen-year-old and says, my son was using my computer yesterday...everything gets recorded, and I've got this webcam of you masturbating to my thirteen-year-old son. Then it's the same blackmail/coercive area of, here's your Facebook profile, here's the guys you work with, and here's an image of you with your penis out, do you want me to send it? No thanks very much. And then you get a conversation with...I'm working with a children's charity, if you send me £500, I'll send that to a charity and we won't hear any more of it. I've seen UK people send £10,000 to stop their photo being shared".

SGI's on SNS's, image & messaging apps

The whole panoply of SGI's can appear on SNS's (Facebook etc.) or messaging/photo-sharing apps (WhatsApp, or Snapchat/Instagram etc.). If online users with such accounts 'like' or 'follow' the mobile app version of a pornography website, their newsfeed will receive a regular flow throughout the day, of still sexual images and adult-content short video clips, the latter frequently as 'Graphic Interchange Formats' (GIF's): short, soundless repeating video clips, and 'Vines' (on Twitter), short six-second looping videos; Although Twitter has recently announced a plan to axe Vines (Williams, 2016). A total of 16.1% of active SGI users in Stage 1 reported seeing video SGI's on their SNS newsfeeds (see [Chart 10](#)). Bisexual Oliver spoke of the stream of online pornography/SGI's on these apps:

"I'm on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat...yes, mainly on Snapchat and Twitter. ...on Snapchat, yes, there's...one or two that I'm signed up to...on Twitter it's easy to get hold of because all you've got to do is type in what you're searching for and it's easy to find".

In addition to signing-up for SGI/pornography, it can also be sent to the account holder without their consent, either as spam from commercial sites, or by malicious individuals whom a recipient may, or may not know. Still selfies, gained via sexting, often find their way onto these SNS/image apps, and can be shared by hundreds of personal acquaintances of the victim, or many thousands if an image goes viral, along with webcam created movie clips of sexual content. Online offenders often harvest SGI's from SNS's with malicious and criminal intentions, enabled to do so by the weak digital privacy skills and identity protection procedures of the victims; they are then recycled for a range of offences: online child grooming, sextortion, blackmail and online stalking/trolling.

Criminal abuse of SGI's

All formats of SGI's can end up in the hands of online offenders, including those harvested from SNS's/message and image apps. However, a plethora of other SGI sources also exist for criminals; for example, when the contact sex-offender videos their own criminal offending, involving CSA, and then proceeds to share it online with others, often non-contact offenders, who view, download and share the images. Also, online criminals who engage with children in internet chatrooms and forums, attempting to trick victims into sending self-taken images of themselves, to someone they have been duped into believing is another teenager. For both children and adults, sextortion, blackmail, cyber-trolling/bullying, cyber-stalking and revenge porn are all possible foci for criminal abuse of SGI's, when in the possession of online offenders. SGI's can also feature in the online grooming process of children for an attempted physical meet-up, with images sent by children to their abuser, or fake/harvested ones from the perpetrator/groomer going the other way, as part of their plans.

Gaining access to illegal and abusive images of children has become relatively effortless for online sexual offenders, as explained by Officer 3, who elucidated that they are now readily available, even on mainstream SNS's/message sites:

"Twitter and Facebook have groups set up on them which are very open about what the group's about, things like 'Teen Titties, Schoolgirls, Jailbait' and any number of variations of them, and there's loads of users, 6,000, 7,000 or 8,000 following these groups; clearly know what it's about and they've joined each group...if it's as overt as that, and organisations like Facebook and Twitter are not dealing with it, or cannot deal with it, then you have got to ask what's happening in the lower SNS's".

Officer 2 confirmed that IIoC's were now widely available on SNS's/messaging apps, unlike the past, where dedicated specialist websites, like 'Wonderland' (Taylor, 2011), needed to be accessed:

"Just going onto a site, you've got choice of thousands of clips and images, you don't even have to groom anyone, you can just get it all there".

One of the reasons for this proliferation of online IIoC's, apart from the growth of SNS's/message and image apps themselves, is undoubtedly the rise in SGI material. The digital camera, and video capture functions of smartphones and laptops, and their mobile connectivity to the online world via Wi-Fi, have made creating and uploading images of abuse easy and largely anonymous, riding the coat tails of adult, legal, online pornography using the same technologies.

UK online users, now number 87.9% of the adult population (active in the last three months), or 45.9 million people. Should even a small minority of these, say 1%, experience negative feelings around SGI's, and more seriously, criminal victimhood with online SGI's, then this represents potentially 500,000 people at risk (ons, 2016). The criminal abuse of SGI's, through CSA, trading IIoC's or child grooming etc., is like a parasitical infestation; just as in adult sex itself, the pleasure of the act can never be wholly free of the small risk of catching an STI, although the risk of harm can be lessened with suitable precautions.

The extent of online pornography viewing

Data [Chart 12](#) from Stage 1, shows a somewhat larger figure of online pornography use than in other studies, e.g. the British Sex Survey, with its 1,052 respondents, which recorded 56% affirming their use of online pornography, and 44% saying they did not use it (Mann, 2014). The 63.4% (377/595) using online pornography in the last six months in [Chart 12](#) probably underestimates the real level of online pornography use in the UK, as Officer 3 half-joked:

“...98% of men look at pornography, the other 2% are probably liars”.

These findings add credence to the theories of McNair (2002) and Paasonen (2011), that pornogrification has permeated the mass media, including digital media, where a striptease culture of sexualised raunchiness has pervaded mainstream culture, making viewing sexually explicit material the norm for most, either directly through pornography, or incorporated into TV shows, advertising or movies, etc.

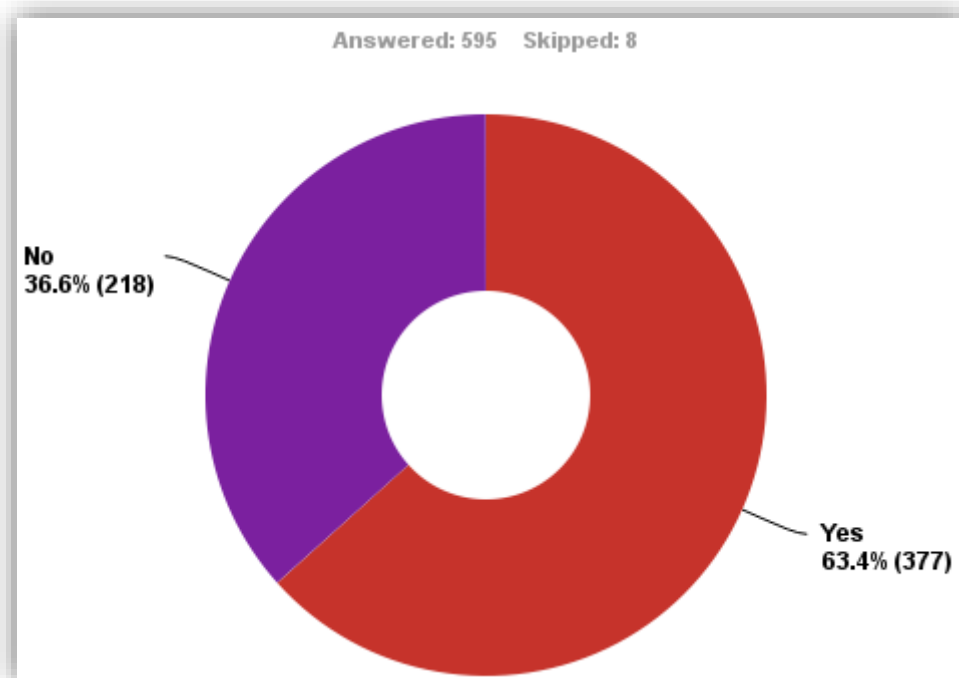


Chart 12 Have you used any kind of online pornography in the last six months?

The survey found a large gender difference in the use of online pornography, as demonstrated in [Chart 13](#) (the small 'other' gender category is excluded).

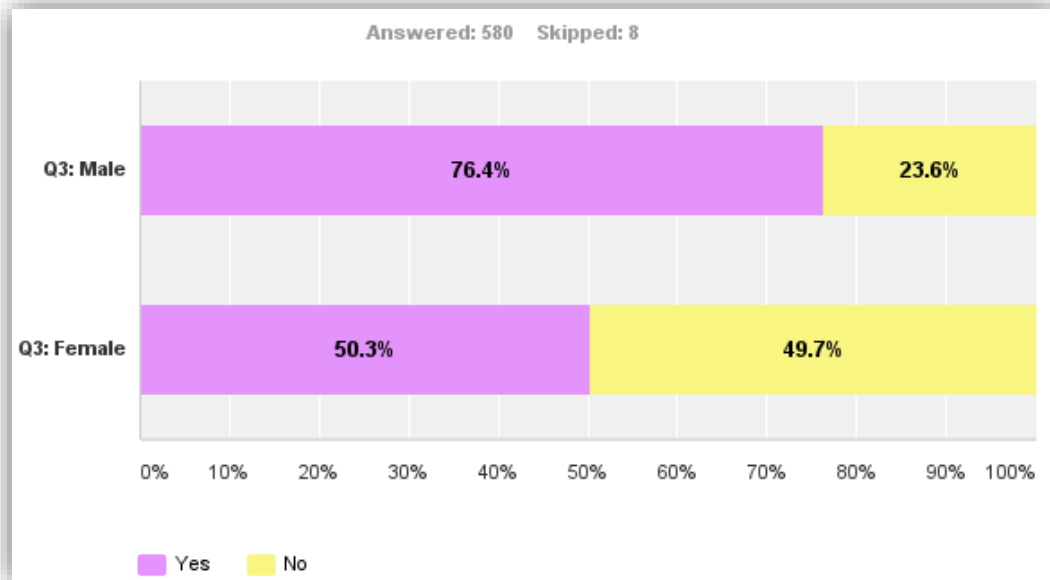


Chart 13 Crosstab of gender and using any online pornography in the last six months

[Chart 13](#) shows that female respondents were divided almost equally in their responses, with 50.3% (147/580) having used online pornography in this period, as contrasted with 76.4% (220/580) of male respondents. These gender differentials are statistically significant ($p=.000$), showing that it is very likely that the occurrence of one variable (gender and online pornography use) affects the probability of the occurrence of another, and therefore they are not caused by random chance.

The five participants in the Stage 3 interviews, reflected this gender imbalance. The four men were all active users of SGI's, whereas the one female interviewee had only experienced the latter either accidentally, or without asking for it to be sent, when using online dating apps like Tinder. Cathy elaborated:

"I was chatting to a man once, who sent me, he was quite a fascinating...because he was very sexually liberated it turned out...we got chatting and he said... he was fantastic in bed, making all these claims; never met him. And what killed it was, he sent a couple of

pictures of himself naked, but then, and this is what killed it, he sent a picture of a woman giving him a blow-job, and that I thought was undignified, and not fair on her. And that was it, I just delete, not talking to you, that's horrible. Particularly the fact that a woman with her mouth around somebody's cock is offensive, it's the fact that it's not very respectful of her I think, to share that...she may have given consent...unlikely indeed, and I don't expect that she would have expected that image to be shared, she may have done, I don't know...and I think he said something like 'me and one of my bitches'".

The traditional gender inequalities in online pornography use, may be narrowing, to such an extent that soon, the two binary genders may be viewing, and possibly creating it, in equal proportions. Second wave anti-porn feminists, like Dworkin (1989) and MacKinnon (1989), could hardly have envisaged that their hopes for greater gender equality, would have turned out in this fashion. Instead of the rejection of misogynist pornography by women, there could soon instead be an equal embracing of it, with men.

A crosstab of age and online pornography use produced the following, in Table 1:²¹

Table 1 Crosstab of online pornography viewing (last six months) and age

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q2: 19 or under (A)	68.9% 42	31.1% 19	10.3% 61
Q2: 20-29 (B)	67.2% 258	32.8% 126	64.9% 384
Q2: 30-39 (C)	72.1% 49	27.9% 19	11.5% 68
Q2: 40-49 (D)	42.1% 24	57.9% 33	9.6% 57
Q2: 50-59 (E)	13.6% 3	86.4% 19	3.7% 22
Total Respondents	376	216	592

²¹ 60+'s excluded due to low respondent numbers

The highest rate of online pornography use (including some SGI's), revealed in Table 1, was among the 30-39's, with 72.1% (49/68), then 18-19's at 68.9% (42/61) and then 20-29's (67.2%-258/384); all three of these categories use was relatively high, and within a 4% margin of each other. The rate of online pornography use declined dramatically over the next two deciles: the 40-49's usage fell to 42.1% (24/57), and then only 13.6% (3/22) for the 50-59's. Age and online pornography use, affecting each other, was statistically significant ($p=.000$).

In the Stage 3 interviews, straight Dave, in his fifties, observed that his online pornography requirements had mellowed with age:

"...watching two people having sex, to me is not much. I mean the seduction and build up is far more interesting than just seeing two people humping each other. I find that laughable, it doesn't do that much for me. There is a real shortage of something, leading up to it...it's a bit like real life isn't it, if you think about it, the anticipation is more interesting, and the build-up."

Differential SGI use & New Social Movements Theory

When a crosstab for sexuality and online pornography use was performed, the results were revealed in the previously seen Chart 9. The figure of 46.7% (141/302) of heterosexuals, had used online pornography/SGI's in the last six months, as compared to 85% (147/173) of homosexuals, and 78.7% (59/75) of bisexuals. The influence of the variables on each other is strong and statistically significant ($p=.000$). The LGBT communities near double usage of online pornography/SGI's in the survey findings, relative to heterosexuals, is an important finding for this research, and its ramifications will be returned to in the next chapter (seven) for a fuller analysis.

These findings about the escalated use of online pornography/SGI's among gay and bisexual men, could be viewed through the prism of New Social Movements (NSM) Theory (Buechler, 1995). It was developed from the late 1960's to explain a wave of modern protest campaigns that were differentiated from the anachronistic Marxist

fixation on purely mono-economic causes. Here, the social, political, identity and cultural rights of various minority groups, have been campaigned for, and often secured, by a raft of NSM's, often mainly middle class, and deploying new protesting approaches, rather than the old-fashioned labour strike (Pichardo, 1997). The NSM groups include: LGBT's, the disabled, animal rights activists, ecological/environmental protesters, anti-nuclear and, the latest incarnation, the 'Occupy Wall Street/Anonymous' movements, which have spawned local variants across the world's major cities (Chomsky, 2012). The LGBT community are just one of these NSM's, being in the vanguard of those minorities campaigning for equal rights, equal-opportunities and an end to both discrimination and hate-crimes. Sexual liberation, in the form of effortless access to online pornography/SGI's, becomes the unlikely midwife of wider social, political and cultural freedoms. The anti-porn feminist stance (Dworkin, 1989; MacKinnon, 1989), that all pornography is inherently misogynist and exploitative, seems to be fatally undermined by the progress of LGBT rights in western societies, due to this group's growing embrace of sexual freedom, via the consumption of online pornography/SGI's. Furthermore, the Marxist approach (Marx & Engels, 2016) also seems to wither before this wave of new freedoms and equal rights, which LGBT minorities have secured for themselves in many western countries, but particularly the UK. Here, a whole raft of measures resonates not with class-exploitation, but rather with greater liberation, flowing from a tranche of equality measures, including: an equal age of consent (sixteen), civil partnerships, gay marriage, gay adoption and fostering, the criminalisation of hate crimes, and the outlawing of discrimination for a wide-range of 'protected characteristics', under the 2010 Equality Act (Featherstone, 2016). SGI's, and the unproblematic access to online pornography, and the establishment of all these minority rights, all seem to endorse the application of NSM Theory to online pornography, and enervate any possible Marxist, or anti-porn feminist interpretation of those changes.

If one of the main functions of online pornography is about the attainment of pleasure, either auto-erotic, or with others, then a vigorous dose of hedonism too, needs to be factored into the LGBT use of online pornography, which is more accelerated compared to heterosexuals.

A crosstab of relationship status and online pornography use resulted in some interesting Stage 1 findings, in [Chart 14](#):

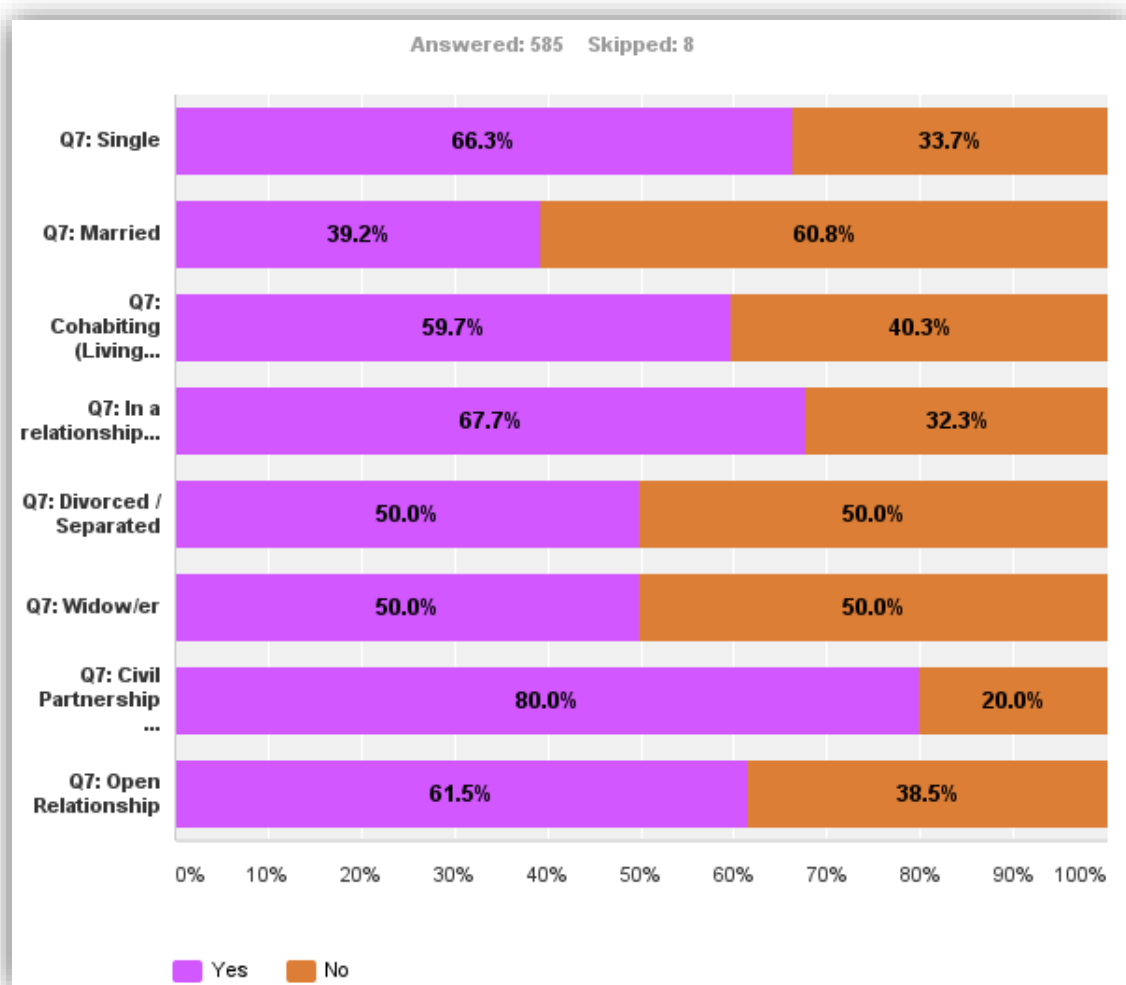


Chart 14 Crosstab of online pornography use (last six months) and relationship status

The four categories on the bottom of [Chart 14](#) all have low numbers, with thirteen or less in each. However, the top four bars, showing married with the lowest use of online pornography, at 39.2% (20/51), suggests that marriage certainly dampens down

usage, relative to the other categories, although whether a spouse knows about their partner's pornography use, remains undetermined.

Kingsley Davis & the impact of SGI's on marriage

Kingsley Davis's (1937) supposition, discussed earlier, about the various social uses of prostitution, is worth raising here in the light of the findings in [Chart 14](#). Online pornography, used by nearly four out of ten married respondents, provides a contemporary application of Davis's thesis, for, without this escape valve, some of those husbands might otherwise have been tempted into extra-marital affairs, leading to more conjugal conflicts, separations, or greater divorce rates. In England and Wales, 32% of all marriages conducted after 1998 ended in divorce by the fifteenth anniversary (ONS, 2015). Dave, from Stage 3, revealed that he was in an amicable, but sexless empty-shell marriage, and explained the dilemmas of being honest, when interacting with online contacts on dating apps:

"The only problem I've got with saying I'm single is to work out where do I go from there? I'm single, who do I live with? I've got to pretend that I live with a friend, you won't be able to come round my place, can't accommodate...My default mechanism is not to lie, I think maybe I should be lying..."

SGI viewing: numbers & demographics

The findings in [Chart 11](#) allowed us to scrutinize the online sexual activities of a large sample of 317 active SGI users from Stage 1. One research aim was to discover the proportion of SGI's more dynamic creators and uploaders, as differentiated from those who merely passively consume such material, which originated elsewhere. Data in [Chart 11](#), uncovered that 26.4% (84/317), of those who had seen SGI's, had also made their own amateur material and shared it online. It is interesting to contrast this with some very recent research findings, published by the NSPCC/OCC²² in the UK, which

²² Office of the Children's Commissioner

revealed that 7% of children, sixteen-and-under, had sent a naked or semi-naked selfie to another online person (Martellozzo, et al., 2016). The divergence between the two pieces of research, show a considerable hastening from children creating and publishing online SGI's, to adults. Taken together, these two sets of findings are undoubtedly knowledge which serves to fulfil one of the key aims of this thesis, namely, the discovery of the magnitude of both consumption, and production, of SGI's within a large group of actual online users. Chart 11's data which revealed that 26.5% of respondents reported they had made, and distributed online SGI's, was indeed an important finding for this inquiry. Such quantitative findings are corroborated by the views of Officer 2:

"It's rife, any child now goes to secondary school, its accepted that they will have a mobile phone, and they won't just have a rubbish mobile phone, they'll have one that takes good photos, is connected to the internet, and all their friends will be on Social Networking, and they'll be on SNS's too, and then it's just seen as normal. They are sexualized from a young age to take photos of themselves pouting...they see advertising stuff and sexualized images all the time, so it's not a big step for them to start take photos half dressed".

SGI creation analysed through alternative theoretical lenses

The cultural studies hypothesis, of a mass media saturated by sexualised imagery, seems to be again confirmed by Officer 2's words. Social media apps have become part of the 'pornosphere', just as much as mainstream media (Paasonen, et al., 2007; McNair, 2013). However, the latter Marxian approach is also given credence, of capitalism's ability to subsume all aspects of the human experience into its own needs. Social media, flooded with online pornography/SGI's, may have been appropriated by the economic system for its own exploitative purposes, and endless ability to self-propagate and renew itself (Caffentzis, 2005). Such an interpretation scuppers Schumpeter's (2003) pessimistic prognostications about the inevitable doom of

capitalism. Rather, the economic system shows repeated resilience, to keep morphing into a new form that continually subsumes any new social factors which emerge.

These findings help to shed light on two common, but incompatible, urban myths about online SGI creation: firstly, that many young people are indulging in it, and secondly, that few adults are doing so. The numbers of SGI creators are revealed by these findings to be only the visible tip of an online 'pornberg', sitting on top of a hidden mass, previously concealed beneath the turbid waters. Various factors have contributed to this obfuscation: lack of research; the speed of technological innovation culminating in sophisticated online devices like laptops, tablets and smartphones; ignorance; myth and importantly, the stigma attached to online pornography/SGI use, which has generated furtive and clandestine handling, away from the glare of public perception and academic research inquiry. The fact that over a quarter of the Stage 1 SGI viewers (84/317), were also proactively creating similar material, undoubtedly represents a vital key finding for this thesis. Crucially, however, it will become apparent that SGI use and creation is emphatically not evenly spread between all groups in the sample.

Differential SGI creation & gender

A more incisive analysis of these data was required, to examine which demographic groups are more, or less, involved in SGI viewing and creation.

Chart 15 displays a crosstab of SGI creation by gender:

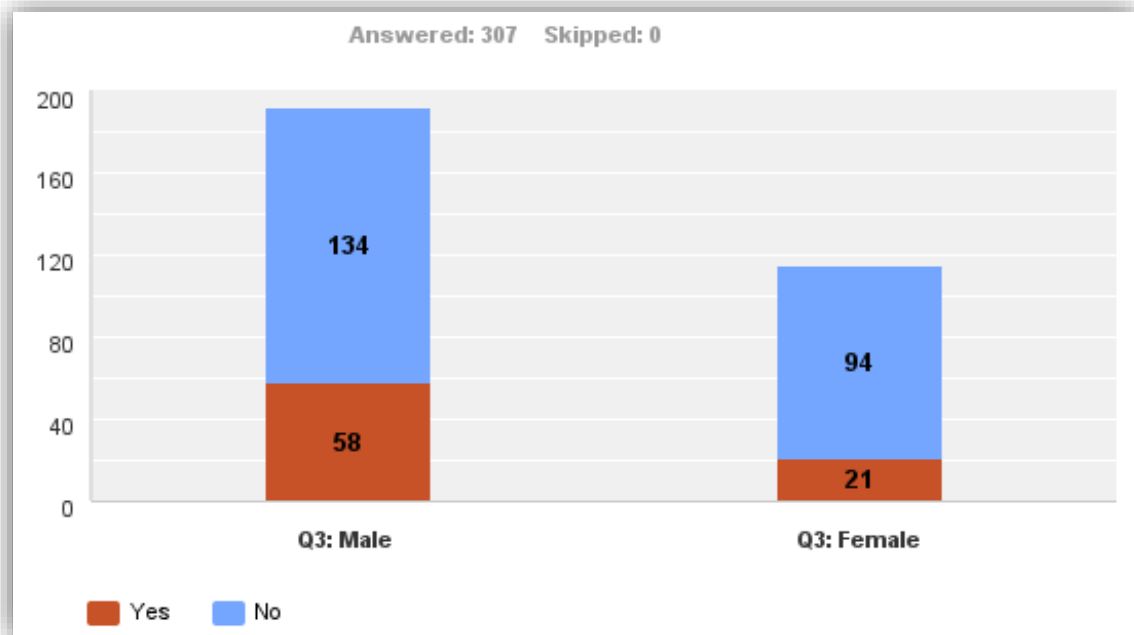


Chart 15 Crosstab of creating and uploading any SGI (in the last six months) & gender

Table 2 shows the percentages:

Table 2 Crosstab of creating and uploading any SGI (in the last six months) & gender

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	30.2% 58	69.8% 134	62.5% 192
Q3: Female (B)	18.3% 21	81.7% 94	37.5% 115
Total Respondents	79	228	307

The findings in [Table 2](#) show a statistically significant influence between gender and SGI creation ($p=.000$). With 18.3% (21/115) of female SGI users having made and distributed their own online pornography, in contrast to the 30.2% (58/192) of male users, a wide gender incongruence is thus exposed. This corresponds strongly with the findings displayed in [Chart 13](#) on general online pornography engagement, whereby three-quarters of men, but only half of women, among 580 respondents, had actively engaged with it online, in the last six months. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the significance of the finding, that approaching one-fifth of active female SGI users are also producing their own amateur images (21/115). Third wave feminists, like Hakim (2011) and Levy (2005), with their notions about confident, assertive, and liberated women using their gender, sexuality, and erotic capital to get ahead in society, will feel vindicated by the findings of this study, that women are increasingly using online pornography/SGI's.

Differential SGI creation & sexuality

When SGI creation was cross tabbed with sexuality, Chart 16 revealed another statistically significant link ($p=.000$):

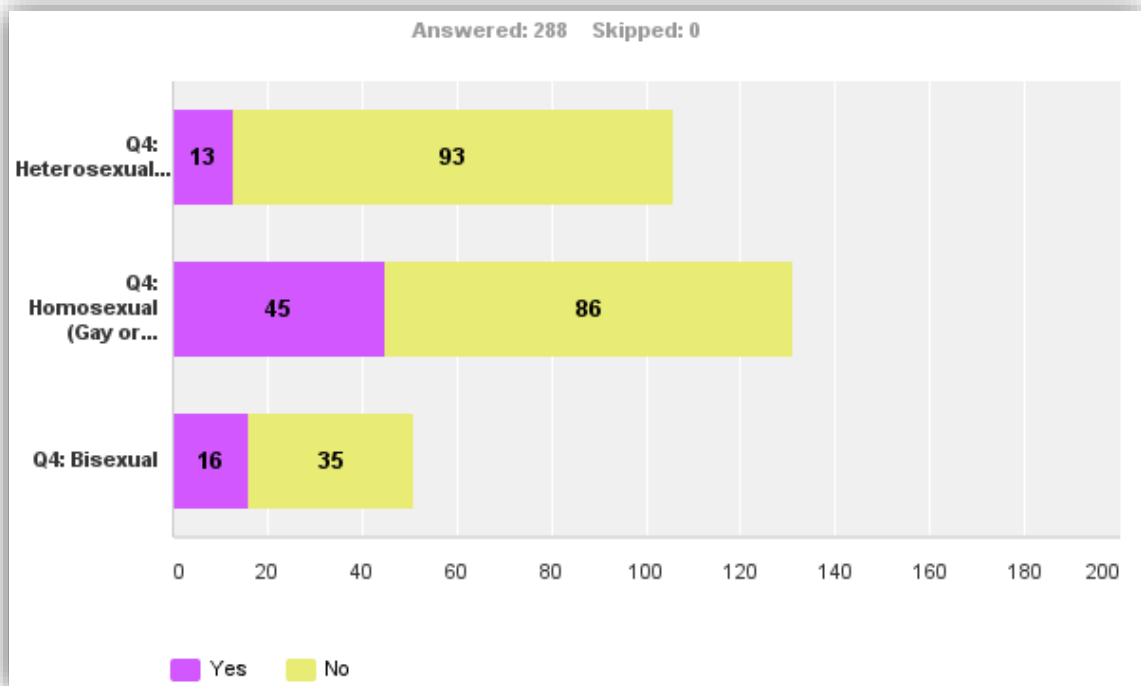


Chart 16 Crosstab between SGI creation (last six months) and sexuality

Table 3 Crosstab between SGI creation (last six months) and sexuality

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q4: Heterosexual (Straight) (A)	12.3% 13	87.7% 93	36.8% 106
Q4: Homosexual (Gay or Lesbian) (B)	34.4% 45	65.6% 86	45.5% 131
Q4: Bisexual (C)	31.4% 16	68.6% 35	17.7% 51
Total Respondents	74	214	288

If we combine the homosexual and bisexual categories in Table 3, then 33% (61/182) of the LGBT community who viewed SGI's in the survey sample were also creating and distributing them. This contrast sharply with only 12.3% (13/106) among heterosexuals doing this.

These findings were reinforced by the Stage 3 interviews, where both the homosexual male interviewees (Jack and Harry) were heavy SGI creators, as part of their casual sex seeking activities on gay hooking-up apps, while the other three participants were all either light SGI creators, or passive consumers only. Oliver, had only created and sent a sexual-selfie of himself once, and regretted it, reflecting on his largely consumer orientated relationship with SGI's:

"...it's good for me at the moment, being single, I love it. I would say the majority is quite harmless, it's done quite tastefully, if that's quite the right way to put it...I wouldn't say it's bad, overall".

These findings indicate that LGBT respondents view more online pornography/SGI's, and are far more accelerated in their dynamic creation of amateur made sexual images, than heterosexuals. It is speculative to infer that this would be reflected in wider society from a non-probability sample in Stage 1; however, the confirmatory findings from the Stage 3 interviews do bolster the merit of this extrapolation. The way such a correlation between sexuality and SGI viewing/creation is interpreted, very much depends on the moral stance of the reader. On the one hand, those endorsing equal liberties and civil rights for minority groups would surely approve; conversely, those who believe that a depraved minority group are exploiting a cornucopia of smut, would be mortified. This study's findings, from the perspective of LGBT rights, in terms of legal equality, employment protection, anti-discrimination measures, outlawing of hate-crimes and sexual equality, do seem to offer a correlation between online pornography use, SGI creation and these social, legal, economic and political advances. The findings of this inquiry, on LGBT's embracing of online pornography/SGI creation, as elements within their liberation package, seems to

affirm some parts of the NSM's theorists ideas, about how modern protest movements have shifted away from the old organised 'top-down' means, via the social democratic political parties and trades unions etc., to more 'bottom-up' smaller groups with single issue causes, coalesced around matters of identity politics, like sexuality, gender, disability, or alternatively, ecological and anti-capitalist concerns (Buechler, 1995; Pichardo, 1997).

However, these research findings are cognisant with one incontrovertible fact: while UK gays and bisexuals launched their mobile hooking-up app (Grindr), in 2009, heterosexuals took a further three years to get an analogue version, Tinder; as will be proven later, this latter is a much tamer and more conventional platform than its gay stable-mate. In [Table 4](#), on the next page, hooking-up apps were revealed to be the fourth most popular out of twelve sites for SGI users viewing amateur images, and swapping sexual selfies is almost *de rigueur* before meeting up for casual gay sex. All these findings contribute to substantiating the far more zealous LGBT engagement with SGI's, as both passive viewers and active creators.

Table 4 Where active SGI users have seen their material in the last six months

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Don't use these Sites or Apps (3)	Total
Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook / Twitter etc.)	29.8% 93	68.6% 214	1.6% 5	312
Internet Dating Sites (e.g. Zoosk, eHarmony, match.com etc.)	9.9% 30	44.4% 135	45.7% 139	304
Tube sites (e.g. Porntube, Xtube, YouTube etc.)	87.8% 274	8.7% 27	3.5% 11	312
WhatsApp	25.2% 78	53.7% 166	21.0% 65	309
Snapchat	20.9% 64	47.7% 146	31.4% 96	306
Instagram	10.8% 33	54.4% 166	34.8% 106	305
Flickr	2.7% 8	47.2% 142	50.2% 151	301
Vine	8.6% 26	45.8% 138	45.5% 137	301
Web cam link ups (e.g. Skype or Chatroulette etc.)	34.2% 104	40.8% 124	25.0% 76	304
Hook-up sites (e.g. Tinder and Grindr etc.)	31.8% 97	28.9% 88	39.3% 120	305
Fetish Websites (e.g. BDSM etc.)	24.0% 72	33.0% 99	43.0% 129	300
Erotic or Pornographic Blogs or Fiction	44.1% 132	24.1% 72	31.8% 95	299

Differential SGI creation & ethnicity

The results for ethnic involvement in creating SGI's within the survey sample are displayed in Table 5, although it should be noted that the numbers for some of the non-white categories are low.

Table 5 Crosstab between SGI creation (last six months) and ethnic background

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q5: White (A)	29.4% 73	70.6% 175	79.0% 248
Q5: Black (B)	5.3% 1	94.7% 18	6.1% 19
Q5: Hispanic (e.g. Spanish, Portuguese, Latin America, South America etc) (C)	18.2% 2	81.8% 9	3.5% 11
Q5: Asian (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi etc) (D)	14.3% 2	85.7% 12	4.5% 14
Q5: South East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese etc) (E)	11.1% 1	88.9% 8	2.9% 9
Q5: Mixed (F)	23.1% 3	76.9% 10	4.1% 13
Total Respondents	82	232	314

Of those identifying themselves as white, among SGI's users, 29.4% of respondents (73/248), had created them too, while for blacks, the lowest category, it was only 5.3% (1/18); the other ethnic groups are distributed between these two extremities; these results are statistically significant ($p=0.009$). The cause of the very low rate of SGI creation among blacks is a matter of conjecture, but perhaps the most likely causal factor may be the high number of foreign, black, international students in the sample, who are often from traditionally more conservative, and religiously inclined states, such as the sub-Saharan African, Christian countries. In sharp contrast, the findings demonstrate that white, western young adults are undoubtedly in the vanguard of viewing, making and distributing online, their own SGI's; in Table 5, nearly one-third admitted to so doing, out of 314 active SGI users. Furthermore, of the five interviewees

in Stage 3, four were white, and one, Latino, seeming to reinforce the prevalence of Caucasians among SGI's greatest producers.

Neo-colonialism & SGI's

The possible implications of these ethnic disparities in SGI creation are profound, as western culture exerts a powerful influence over the developing third world, in terms of Hollywood, TV series, pop culture, consumer products and fast-food, etc. Whereas, in the nineteenth century, the acquisitive European imperial powers dispatched their armies and navies overseas to expand their foreign empires and pillage natural resources, now online pornography/SGI-culture, from these findings, may be in the vanguard of a new wave of cultural neo-colonialism (Kennedy, 1989; Sartre, 2006). Their geographical empires may have been lost in the 1950's and 60's, but the former colonial masters now export cultural hegemony to the dominions they were shorn of. Smartphones may have replaced gunboats, as the chief weapon of this neo-colonial cultural hegemony. The heavy preponderance of whites (29.4%) who are making SGI's, contrasting with blacks (5.3%), and Asians (14.3%), per Table 5, could be interpreted as a validation of ideas on neo-colonialism by Sartre (2006), who maintained that the former colonial nations are now subverting the independence of their former satrapies, using alternative, but more insidious means, such as cultural warfare, through the onslaught of western media/social media and its concomitant online pornography/SGI's.

Soon, the entire surface of the planet will be perpetually connected to the digital world, as Google's 'Project Loon' is set to launch a network of permanent, high altitude atmospheric internet balloons, offering universal data service accessibility; Facebook, too, has an analogous plan with the recent successful test flight of its airborne drone 'Aquila' (Kelion, 2015; The Economic Times, 2016). The 'pornosphere' may literally, rather than just figuratively, be about to arrive for every earth resident in possession of a cheap, online connected smartphone. To illustrate, in India, where

the most inexpensive current 'Android' online connected device was R888, or, only £10.27 (Times of India, 2016).

Differential SGI creation & relationship status

When a crosstab was conducted for relationship status and SGI creation, Table 6 revealed:

Table 6 Crosstab between SGI creation (last six months) and relationship status

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q7: Single (A)	24.7% 41	75.3% 125	53.7% 166
Q7: Married (B)	5.9% 1	94.1% 16	5.5% 17
Q7: Cohabiting (Living Together) (C)	33.3% 12	66.7% 24	11.7% 36
Q7: In a relationship, but not living together (D)	24.7% 18	75.3% 55	23.6% 73
Q7: Divorced / Separated (E)	50.0% 2	50.0% 2	1.3% 4
Q7: Widow/er (F)	0.0% 0	100.0% 1	0.3% 1
Q7: Civil Partnership (in the UK) (G)	25.0% 1	75.0% 3	1.3% 4
Q7: Open Relationship (H)	50.0% 4	50.0% 4	2.6% 8
Total Respondents	79	230	309

Only four of the eight categories in Table 6 had enough respondents to warrant an interpretation of the data; the remaining four had only seventeen respondents combined. SGI creation among the singles was 24.7% (41/166), for the 'in a relationship but not living together' group, also 24.7% (18/73), with cohabiters on 33.3% (12/36) and married at 5.9% (1/17). The results are statistically significant, showing a clear relationship between respondents' partnership status and the tendency to generate

their own SGI material ($p=0.013$). It is certainly a surprise that cohabitees, with 33%, are the largest category for SGI generation, pushing the singles and in a relationship but not living together groups, into joint second place, both on 24.7%. One possible explanation of this could be that cohabitees feel far less committed to their current sexual partner than the married SGI users, of whom only 5.9% had created SGI's. Consequently, they may feel more inclined to the viewing of online pornography in general and the creation and distribution of SGI's also.

Linking these findings to the five participants in the Stage 3 interviews, four were single, and one was in an empty-shell marriage: i.e. cohabiting without having sexual relations. The low-rate of SGI creation among married spouses, per [Table 6](#), seems to somewhat undermine the conceptions of Davis (1937), on the social uses of prostitution, and discussed earlier in this thesis in terms of its applicability to SGI's. However, cohabitees are the highest category of SGI makers, offering some contradictory support to the Davis theory.

Differential SGI creation & religious affinity

Only two variables under religious affinity received enough respondent replies to warrant a crosstab analysis with SGI creation, namely Christianity, and no religion. The results are displayed in [Chart 17](#):

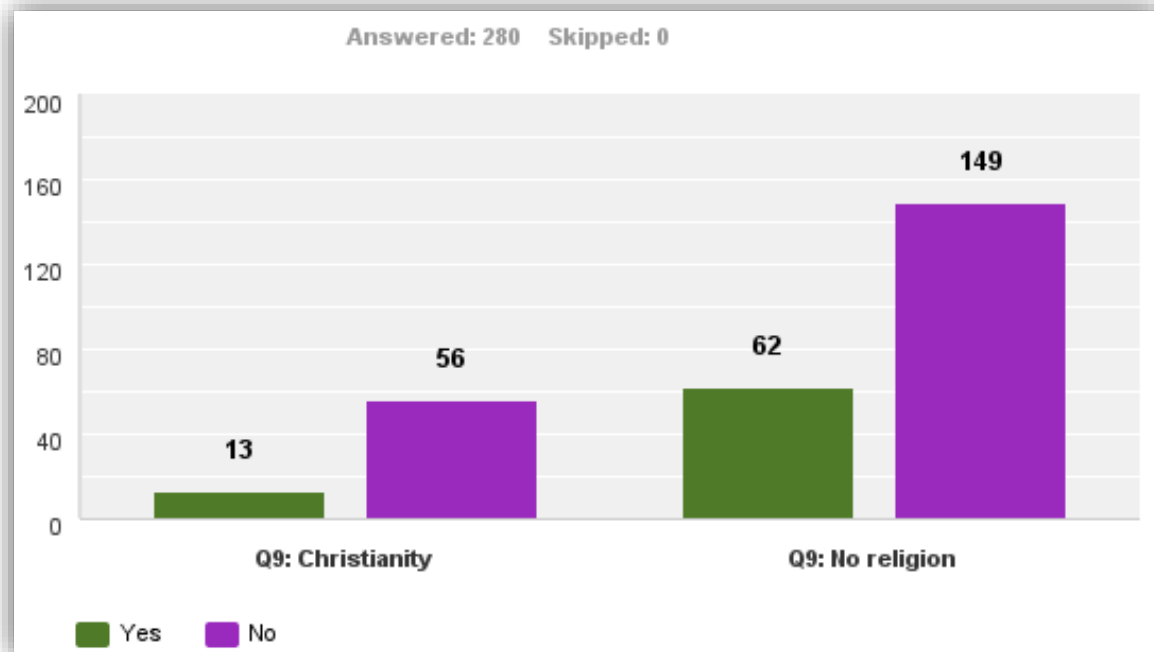


Chart 17 Crosstab between SGI creation (last six months) and Christianity/no religion

Only 18.8% (13/69) of Christian online pornography users, had created their own SGI's, as contrasted with 29.4% (62/211) of those in the no religion group, a statistically significant relationship ($p=0.000$). Those in the no religion category are slightly more likely (+2.9%), to create SGI's than the average, for all 280 respondents who answered (mean=26.5%), while Christians are less likely (-7.7%) than the mean to do so. It is legitimate to speculate from these findings that the Christians in Stage 1, were more likely to reject online pornography/SGI's as antithetical to the teachings of their church's credo, whether Roman Catholic, Protestant or Greek/Russian Orthodox, etc. However, we should acknowledge the fact that nearly one-fifth of Christians in this sample of 205 active SGI users had indeed also made their own SGI's. Perhaps the

interesting question to arise out of the findings in [Chart 17](#) is: how can such a substantial minority be comfortable with making SGI's, while simultaneously maintaining their Christian faith?

Dave, from Stage 3, was virulently hostile to the influence of organised religion in the UK, over education and, by extension, control of the PSHE/SRE curriculum:

"I don't think there should be religious schools, they are rubbish".

His strident opinions on organised religion are more in tune with the UK as an increasingly secular country. The tide of online pornography/SGI's seems likely to continue to rise, as the recent secularisation process of western European societies continues to rapidly ebb away at the numbers of active worshippers, churches' memberships and the temporal power of organised faiths. Thus, the two Archbishops and twenty-four Bishops of the established Church of England (CoE) (2016), currently sitting as 'Lords Spiritual' in the House of Lords, increasingly seem like anachronistic dinosaurs in modern, secular Britain. A century after German sociologist Max Weber pronounced the forthcoming triumph of scientific rationalism over 'magic', he seems to have been lucidly clairvoyant in his prognostications about the decline of religion in modern western society (Bendix, 1977). Had he lived just a few years beyond 1920, he would have seen Berlin becoming the locus for a sexual free-for-all, so reviled by the NSDAP (Nazi Party) as 'Weimar decadence' (Isherwood, 1998). Berlin in 1930-32 was perhaps the first inchoate heralding of the western sexualised porno-culture that would eventually manifest itself as the normalisation of online pornography, including newly emergent SGI's.

SGI's: Platforms & types

The online platforms where SGI's are viewed and downloaded are worth scrutinising, and were exposed in [Chart 10](#), seen earlier.

SGI's on the PornTubes

The ascent of the free PornTube sites, as the paramount method for viewing and distributing SGI's, is evident in [Chart 10](#) (61.2% of 317 active SGI users). The free-porn model, incorporating watching uploaded SGI's, has undoubtedly contributed to the commensurately rapid decline of both commercial DVD retailers/renters, and adult movie-making studios. To illustrate, Blockbuster video rental shops in the UK dropped from its zenith of 528 stores, to zero, by 2015 (BBCBusiness, 2013); and adult movies made in LA, which had numbered 5,000 a year in 2011, crashed by 90% between 2012-13, following a local bylaw requiring male actors to wear condoms during the shoots (Walker, 2014). The findings in [Chart 10](#), showing the rise of free-porn access to SGI's, and the secondary evidence just listed, both add substantial credibility to the application of Schumpeter's (2003; 2009) theory of creative destruction, to the upheavals sweeping through the commercial pornography industry in the face of the disruptive threat from SGI's. In the UK, 'self-employment' had risen from 11.9% of all workers in 2000, to 13% in 2008, and 14.9% in 2015, indications that working for yourself is an upward trend in the new digital online Gig economy, whether as parcel courier, fast food deliverer, a sex-worker, or even an artisanal SGI creator (ons, 2016).

SGI's & sexting

Sexting is one of the main elements of SGI's which features commonly in the media as one of online pornography's chief dangers, particularly for adolescents. [Chart 10](#) revealed a 33.1% (105/307) engagement rate, for seeing SGI's in this manner, just over half that of the PornTube viewing figure. A great deal of public concern is focussed on children's sexting, as this can lead to them sending an ILoC's (of themselves), and

then the image being used by online criminals, for sextortion and blackmail, or online child grooming. A surreptitious visit to a legal adult PornTube site by a child, is certainly a less dangerous threat to the health, safety and digital privacy of the child, although it may be very disturbing, than that same child sexting SGI's of themselves to an online contact, or boyfriend/girlfriend. And, of course, children viewing adult legal online pornography, including SGI's, is not illegal in the UK.

Officer 1, from Stage 2, recounted the possible ramifications of children sexting SGI's/self-taken IloC's:

"...if they are not at the initial stage abusive and coercive then, there is always the prospect that it is going to become that, when the boyfriend then says 'I now want an image of you doing something else', or the relationship breaks-down and then becomes a blackmail type scenario...also I see them photos, in that scenario, being picked up by paedophiles who identify the child, and will try to corrupt the child using photos taken from a boyfriend/girlfriend".

A figure of 25.2% of 317 active SGI users saw their images in the category of 'amateur fetish material', per [Chart 10](#). This revealed that a significant minority are enthusiastically embracing that format of SGI to indulge their own sexual kinks and peccadillos, pushing the boundaries way beyond plain 'vanilla' sex. The NSM theorists (Pichardo, 1997; Buechler, 1995), discussed earlier, will be heartened by this finding, interpreting it as a form of modern-day manumission for an oppressed Bondage Discipline Sado-Masochism (BDSM), sexual minority. Sexual liberation, in the form of SGI's, would represent greater freedom in terms of the culture and identity of this BDSM subgroup. Opponents, however, will undoubtedly diagnose the same findings as evidence of freaks, perverts and sexual deviants enjoying free rein to satiate their weird and depraved carnal lusts. To adapt an old aphorism, sexual norms and desires, just like beauty, are undoubtedly very much in the eye of the online pornography beholder.

Fifty Shades of SGI's: online erotic amateur fiction

A surprising finding, in all the categories of SGI use from [Chart 10](#), is the 40.4% (128/317), who engage with the format as sexual and erotic amateur fiction, ranking fourth out of twelve. Although, whether this legitimately counts as an SGI is open to question, unless the work has appropriate sexualised drawings included. The publishing blockbuster 'Fifty Shades of Grey' and its three sequels by E. L. James, together with a myriad of publishing imitators, sprang from amateur online publishing sites for erotic fiction (Flood, 2015). Many of the works contain a mild BDSM fetish plotline. Whether truly SGI's or not, erotic fiction does show how sex, pornography and fetishism have inculcated themselves into mainstream culture. This may reinforce the previous point, about SGI's potentially providing a liberating mechanism to sexual-fetish minorities.

SGI's & webcam sex

[Chart 10](#) also displayed that 31.5% (100/317) of SGI users, engaged with the images via webcam sex. This figure resonates with the IWF's (2015) research, which identified this mode of SGI as being of great concern, in relation to the numbers of IIoC's that are finding their way online. Per their study, webcams are by far the largest source of IIoC/SGI, with over 85.9% of 3,803 CSA images coming from that source. Children taking their webcam fitted laptops into their domestic bedrooms and bathrooms, to create these self-incriminating images, were the most common type of IIoC found in the IWF's study.

Despite the dangers to children, many adult SGI users are undoubtedly just looking for a quick 'webcam wank' with an online contact on a site like Chatroulette or Omegle etc. Others are having net-sex with a lover who happens to be some geographical distance away. Many gay men may have moved-on from the passé web-wank' scene, as it is viewed as rather superficial and unsatisfying, when an authentic somatic experience is potentially only minutes away, after exchanging still SGI's via a hooking-up app.

As Jack reflected upon:

“I just use still images, maybe just videos, then I would go into an off-line meeting...there’s a minority who enjoys that, I’m not part of that scene...I was getting more requests of going onto Skype and wanting online a few years ago, currently it’s more like, lets meet up”.

Frequency of SGI viewing

The frequency with which amateur online pornography users are creating and distributing their material requires intense analysis. [Chart 18](#) shows the incidence with which, those eighty-four actively creating SGI’s in Stage 1, produced such images:

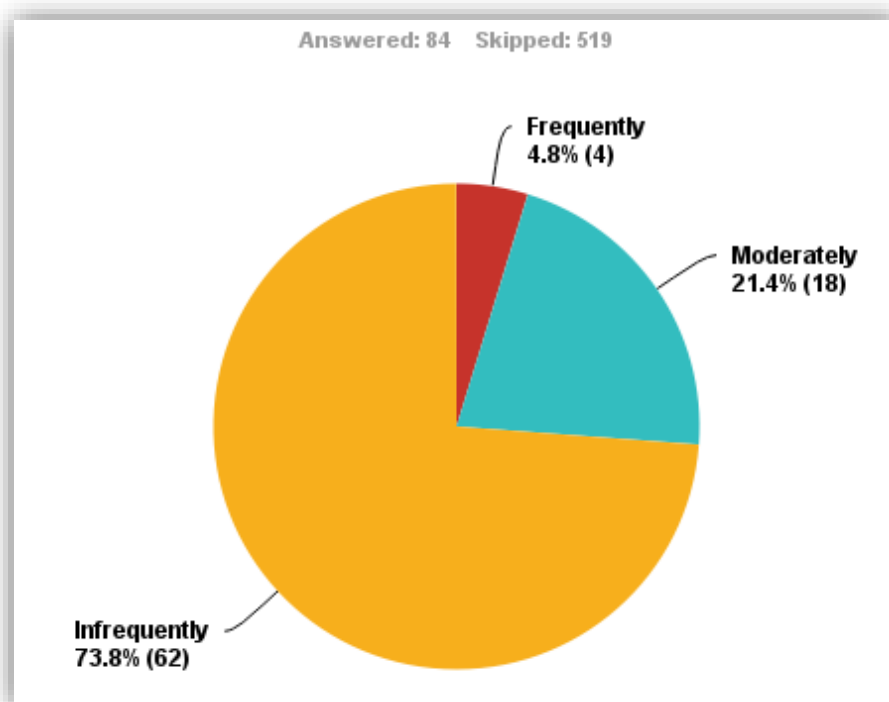


Chart 18 Frequency of making and uploading own SGI's online

Most SGI creators, 73.8% (62/84), produced material infrequently, with only 4.8% (4/84) reporting doing so frequently. These quantitative data were fortified by the Stage 3 findings, where only the two gay males were regular SGI generators. Jack and

Harry, as gay men, were both extremely frequent makers of sexual selfies as part of their hooking-up app activities, while the two other males did so extremely infrequently, and Cathy had never created any herself, only viewed them. Overall, the gay/bisexual categories were the groups which made substantial quantities of SGI's. Oliver ruminated about sending a neck to knee shot of his naked body, and erect penis, to a female online contact:

"...when I did it, and as soon as I did it again, I felt mortified. Again, it's just I suppose that that image can become uncontrolled, it's not in my possession anymore, because I've sent it to someone else and you know, I could end up with my picture all over Facebook, I could end up getting bullied. Although lucky enough, I didn't have my head in shot so...I'd never do it again, no".

Oliver's sentiments are more representative of the heterosexual interviewees greater restraint in their approach to SGI creation, and can be juxtaposed against the banality with which the two gay males in Stage 3, produced and sent SGI's of themselves on the hooking-up apps. Harry expounded upon the rather terse procedure for swapping sexual selfies among gays, to arrange sexual hook-ups:

"...like there is no conversation, it's all the about body. You say hi how are you, you know, and the conversation flows and you exchange pictures and suddenly you hear nothing anymore from that person...it's all about the body and the looks, and that happens often enough, it may happen, and make you feel less valued..."

To iterate a pivotal research discovery, around one-quarter of Stage 1's online pornography users are making their own SGI's, and, of these, approximately three-quarters do so infrequently. Of the five Stage 3 interviewees, only the two gay men were frequent SGI creators. It is possible to conclude from these findings that any elevated societal fears surrounding the issue of online SGI creation, certainly in the case of heterosexual adult users, may be out of all proportion to the actual extent of this behaviour.

Perceptions of SGI's as 'a problem'

Chart 19 revealed around one-third of the survey sample (combined 'agrees' 186/596), believed SGI's are a big problem in modern society. Moreover, the low numbers of frequent creators of SGI's in Chart 18, adds credence to the ideas that rising mass 'addiction' to this element of online pornography is more of a myth than reality, despite it being a *cause celebre* for fundamentalist Christians, and self-help book authors for addiction 'victims', to sex and online pornography (Bowring, 2005; Ley, 2012).

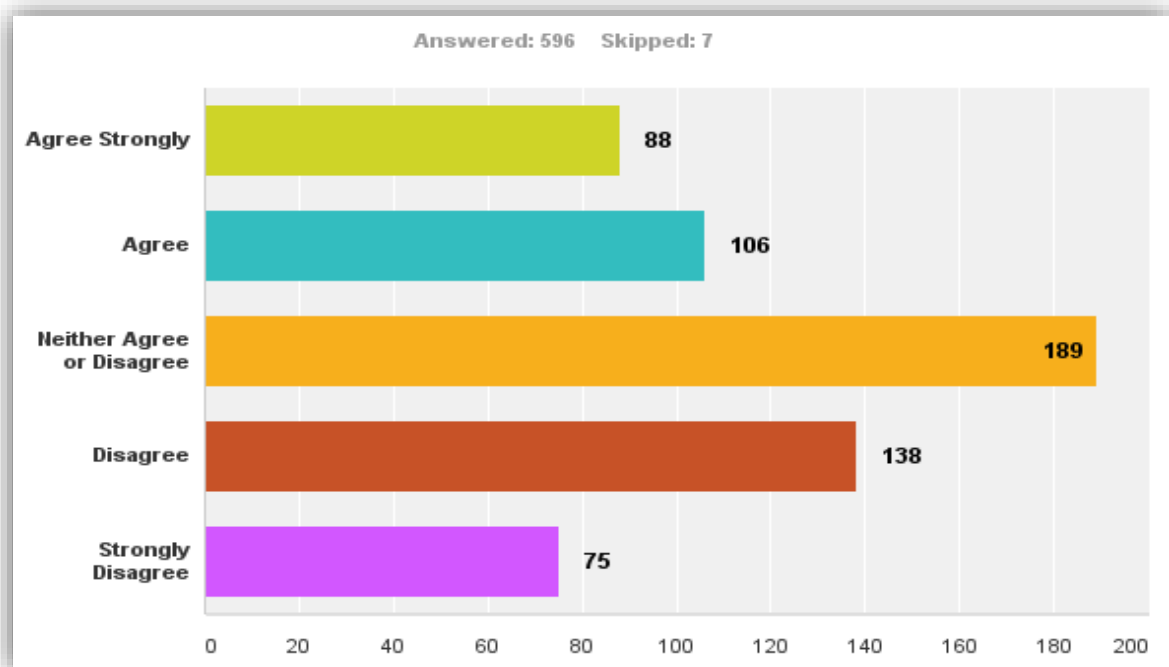


Chart 19 The viewing and making of SGI's online is a big problem in society

The interpretation again, is that online SGI's may be casting a disproportionately large, negative aura over public perceptions regarding the true extent of their use and their potential for causing problems to most adults in society. Even a mouse can cast a large shadow, when the light shines from a certain direction.

SGI's: Quantities & dangers

Online pornography users in Stage 1 were asked what proportion of their material was amateur produced, and the results are displayed in [Chart 20](#). The findings present an insight into SGI use by this large sample, revealing that 85.4% (322/377), of online pornography consumers had viewed amateur produced material:

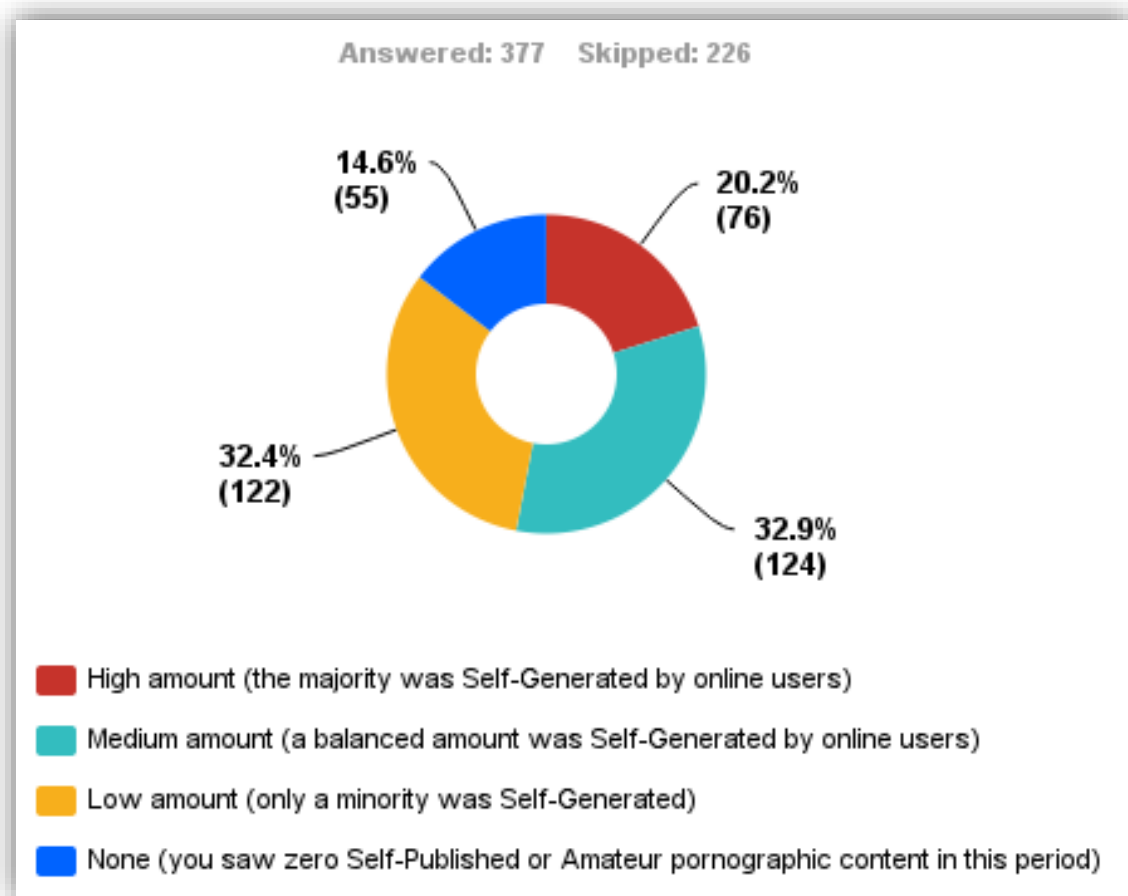


Chart 20 What proportion of your online pornography (in the last six months) was SGI in origin?

The 266 respondents who 'skipped' this question, were mostly comprised of those whose participation in the survey had been terminated earlier, when they answered that they had not seen any online pornography in the last six months. This reason for those skipping, remained valid for any further charts/tables generated from among

the active online pornography/SGI users. Some 85.4% (322/377) of all online pornography users in [Chart 20](#), had seen some SGI's in the last half year, with 20.2% (76/377), declaring that they had seen a high amount. In contrast, only 14.6% (55/377), had seen no SGI's in their online pornography use for the same period. The findings in [Chart 20](#) demonstrate that SGI's are now viewed and used by the clear majority of the sample's online pornography users, indeed it may be legitimate to assert that SGI's, and online pornography, are now so intermingled that they have become one and the same thing, just as Roman Catholics and Protestants are simply different denominations within the Christian faith. This analogy is not without irony either, as twin trends show western Europe's population concurrently eschewing organised religion, but increasingly taking up online pornography viewing. Weekly church attendance is down to only 13.1% in the UK, while online pornography viewing in the last six months, in the survey, had reached 63.4% (377/595), per [Chart 12](#) (BHA, 2016). God may very well be dead, as Nietzsche (1974) claimed; while the growth of online pornography could be one of the profane instruments of his demise.

The evidence that 85.4% (322/377) of the surveys online pornography viewers in [Chart 20](#), have seen SGI's in the last six months, also adds real substance to the postulation that SGI's and free-pornography are smashing the business models of pornographic DVD retailers/renters and erotic film producers, in the spirit of Schumpeter's (2009) conception, that constant innovation is needed to ensure the profitability of capitalism. SGI's and free-porn are being viewed on the advertisement heavy PornTube websites, and on PPV channels. However, Schumpeter's lachrymose predictions regarding the imminent collapse of the capitalist economic system, have assuredly not come to pass, yet.

Frequency of SGI viewing or creation

When the surveys 308 active online pornography users were asked about the frequency of their SGI engagements per week, [Chart 21](#) revealed their responses:

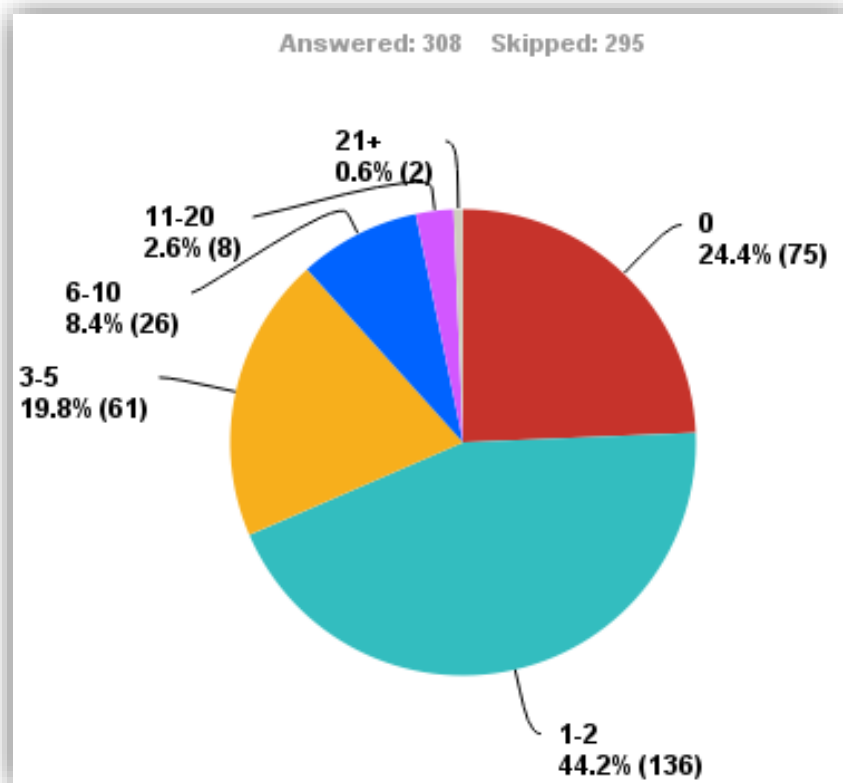


Chart 21 How many times a week do you view, use or create your SGI pornography?

A most interesting finding in [Chart 21](#) is those who answered zero, at 24.5% (75/308), indicating that although they had seen some SGI's in the previous six months, this was still an irregular occurrence. The most prevalent group, were the moderate SGI users, of one or two occasions a week, on 44.2% (136/308). Heavy engagers with SGI's, of twenty-one or more a week, comprised only 0.6% (2/308) of active users. This finding seems to contradict the fears of an impending SGI/online pornography driven social and moral catastrophe. These trepidations have generated much angst, amongst those calling for greater censorship/banning of online pornography. This was discussed in the literature review, which cited fundamentalist religious leaders and

conservative politicians calling for the outlawing of pornography on moral grounds, in the free speech Vs censorship debate. If we combine the two lowest categories of weekly SGI use (one to five engagements per week) in Chart 21, then the total figure is 64% (197/308), who encountered them temperately, each week. Nearly two-thirds of SGI users interact in some way with home-made sexual/erotic images, less than once per day in an average week. For argument's sake, if we categorized the twenty-one or more a week group as heavy users of SGI's, there seems scant evidence from this sample's answers, at only 0.6% (2/308), to confirm any widespread online pornography or sexual addiction problems. These findings concur with the refusal of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) (Ley, 2012), to recognise these alleged 'behavioural addictions' as genuine medical conditions.

Contrarily, the extremely Spartan quantum of problem heavy usage cases more aptly endorses the opposite view, that SGI's/online pornography have taken their place among the many everyday leisure pastimes enjoyed legally and predominantly safely, by a great many adults in modern western society, though clandestinely among some adolescent children. Indeed, with only 0.6% (2/308) respondents reporting excessive weekly use of SGI's, this new mass entertainment is proving to be far safer and less problematical than many established and, ironically, more socially acceptable, non-work forms of rest and recuperation, such as smoking and drinking. These findings endorse the writings of John Wilson (1980), who advanced the theory that 'self-fulfillment' is one of the four main elements of non-work recreation. SGI's suffuse a variety of pleasures for most adult users, and arguably such activities have become the norm for many online users, little different to other leisure pastimes like a dinner date, or trip to the cinema with friends. Officer 5, when asked to consider the overall impact of online pornography/SGI's for adults in society, seemed to add substance to this interpretation:

"People aren't sending naked pictures of themselves to other people, doing it out of some altruistic motive, they want a shag don't they, or they teeing themselves up for some form of further sexual encounter...that's a given. The fact that people can do that is a good

thing, you've got to be sensible about it...I think porn as a whole, internet porn, legal porn, your YouPorn and what have you, and the fact that you can send that kind of stuff, great, crack on, I think it's a good thing".

Officer 5 did add the important caveat of being careful not to overstep the boundaries of legality, and he emphasized the real dangers of legal adult online pornography and SGI's, for children. However, his sentiments revealed a remarkable degree of liberal toleration for online pornography/SGI's, from an officer whose main occupational role is catching online CSA/IloC's offenders.

The situation of SGI's for adolescents were evocatively addressed by straight Dave, who opined:

"I think all this sexual danger stuff personally, I think what's the danger in the world, global warming, starvation, poverty, lack of education? Sending naughty pictures to someone isn't; I don't consider that a world threatening danger. If two sixteen-year-olds send naughty pictures to each other, to me, what's the difference between going behind the bike sheds, sort of you know, it almost sounds like the kind of thing that two sixteen-year-olds might do...it shouldn't scar them for life".

To underscore the point about the relative scale of SGI's dangers, the following is worth considering. Alcohol dependency in the UK was estimated recently by the NHS to be at the rate of 9% of adult men and 4% for women. Furthermore, a total of 6,933 deaths were directly attributed to alcohol in 2011, and this excludes the incidences of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and crime, in which the perpetrators were under the influence of that legal drug (drinkaware, 2016). Likewise, another popular adult legal leisure pastime, smoking, kills 100,000 people directly in the UK every year, and lowers the life expectancy of those indulging in it by around ten years. Currently, around 20% of the UK population smokes, a much more massive problem than the numbers of heavy SGI users in the survey (0.6%), uncovered in [Chart 21](#) (nhs.uk, 2015; ash.org, 2015). Contrast this low rate of SGI use with the consequences of when people 'enjoy' too much fat, salt and sugar in their diets, often via popular leisure pursuits like eating out, or devouring too much take-away junk/fast food (Schlosser, 2004). One

consequence of this is that the rate of adult (over sixteen's) obesity in the UK, reached 25.6% in 2014 (Public Health England, 2016). Increased incidences of strokes, heart attacks, and Type II diabetes etc. all flow partly from diets with excessive sugar, fat and salt, all staples of fast food/junk food consumption, and eating-out. Yet these, and other toxic legal recreational/leisure activities, continue to inflict massive harms on adults and children, while SGI/online pornography use attracts the excoriating indignation of many fundamentalist Christians, conservative political commentators and a vociferous 'anti-porn' lobby.

The findings, of extremely infrequent, heavy SGI weekly use, only 2/308 in [Chart 21](#), exposes a significant divergence of perception and reality, in relation to those recreational and leisure activities in society which cause significant harm and death to large numbers of people, and those, like online SGI/pornography use, which do not. Although, as will be seen shortly, for a minority, including children and vulnerable adults, the criminal abuse of SGI's represents an extreme and devastating hazard.

To sum up this significance of this sections findings: the leisure and recreational service industries in the UK: 'Big Tobacco' companies like Imperial Brands; the beer, wine and spirits industries, represented by Diageo etc.; and the fast/junk food manufacturers and retailers, led by Premier Foods and McDonald's etc., are all inflicting legalised, slow, mass murder on their customers. How do the undoubted harms of SGI's and adult legal pornography, for the minority, stand-up against them?

Differential SGI use, by demographics

Gender & SGI use

When a crosstab of gender and SGI weekly use was conducted, [Table 7](#) resulted:

Table 7 Crosstab of gender and weekly SGI use

	0 (1)	1-2 (2)	3-5 (3)	6-10 (4)	11-20 (5)	21+ (6)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	15.5% 29	41.2% 77	27.8% 52	11.2% 21	3.2% 6	1.1% 2	62.8% 187
Q3: Female (B)	39.6% 44	48.6% 54	7.2% 8	2.7% 3	1.8% 2	0.0% 0	37.2% 111
Total Respondents	73	131	60	24	8	2	298

Females in [Table 7](#) were significantly more likely to have seen no SGI's in a week, 39.6% (44/111) Vs 15.5% (29/187) for males. However, mild SGI users (one or two times a week) are more balanced, with 48.6% (54/111), for females and 41.2% (77/187) for males. Male SGI usage in the more frequent weekly categories, consistently outstrips females, with the six to ten categories showing the greatest divergence, with males on 11.2% (21/187), and females only 2.7% (3/111). Among the heaviest users, the small number of cases (2/298-1.1%) were both male. The findings are statistically significant ($p=.000$), and confirm other data/research showing less online pornography use for females, than males.

These quantitative data are backed-up by evidence from Stage 3, where all four male interviewees had extensively viewed SGI's, whereas the one female respondent had encountered them infrequently, and without requesting them. Furthermore, Cathy knew personally, hardly any SGI users/creators; although her words about meeting one woman, who did use dating sites for casual sex hook-ups, and presumably involving SGI selfies, are apropos:

"I've now met somebody, a woman who does use hook-up sites for a one-night, just for sex, purely for sex...I'd never, in women I think it is rare...I've never come across a female before who used it...just purely for sex, she just like right, I want a shag, you go on here, put on. I think that's quite refreshing, it's what your own moral boundaries would let you do, yes, I'd love sex but I'm not prepared to do it in that thing...she was on something called adults.com; this woman had no holds barred in comparison to me...I get the perception, or maybe it's just that women don't talk about it, Jo did, she's very open about it. But I've never talked to any other women who use hook-up sites, and the ones that I know who use dating sites are telling me they are after a relationship, and not just a quickie...I don't know whether it's because women don't want that, or whether its taboo..."

Age & SGI use

A crosstab of age categories and SGI weekly use, is displayed in [Table 8](#):

Table 8 Crosstab of number of times SGI's used in a week, and age ranges

	0 (1)	1-2 (2)	3-5 (3)	6-10 (4)	11-20 (5)	21+ (6)	Total
Q2: 19 or under (A)	14.7% 5	50.0% 17	23.5% 8	11.8% 4	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	11.1% 34
Q2: 20-29 (B)	25.5% 55	43.1% 93	19.9% 43	8.3% 18	2.8% 6	0.5% 1	70.6% 216
Q2: 30-39 (C)	15.8% 6	50.0% 19	15.8% 6	10.5% 4	5.3% 2	2.6% 1	12.4% 38
Q2: 40-49 (D)	50.0% 9	33.3% 6	16.7% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	5.9% 18
Total Respondents	75	135	60	26	8	2	306

The fifties' and over categories have been excised from [Table 8](#), as there were too few respondents to warrant an analysis. Of the 306 respondents in the four age bands displayed, the oldest group 40-49's, 50% of the eighteen respondents saw no SGI's in

a week, as contrasted with the 18-19's, where only 14.7% (5/34), saw none. All three categories of 18-39's reported mild SGI weekly use (once or twice) as the most frequent answer, ranging from 43.1% (93/216) for the 20-29's, and 50% each for the under-19's (17/34), and 30-39's (19/38). These findings, although interesting, are however not statistically significant ($p=0.13$); despite this, a broad conclusion can still be drawn, that the younger age categories see more SGI's in a week than the middle-aged ones, but the amount they view is predominantly only at an infrequent quantum (one or two cases a week). To reiterate, public conceptions about the magnitude of the danger represented by SGI use, are severely out of kilter with its true extent, as evidenced by these data. What use of SGI's there is, is predominantly only a couple of times a week, more akin, to use an analogy, to a gentle stream of pornography rather than a raging and dangerous torrent.

First viewing of SGI's

The question of the age at which SGI users first saw the material is of real interest to this research, especially if the results are analysed by demographic characteristics such as gender and sexuality. Chart 22 shows the age at which Stage 1 SGI users, first encountered it:

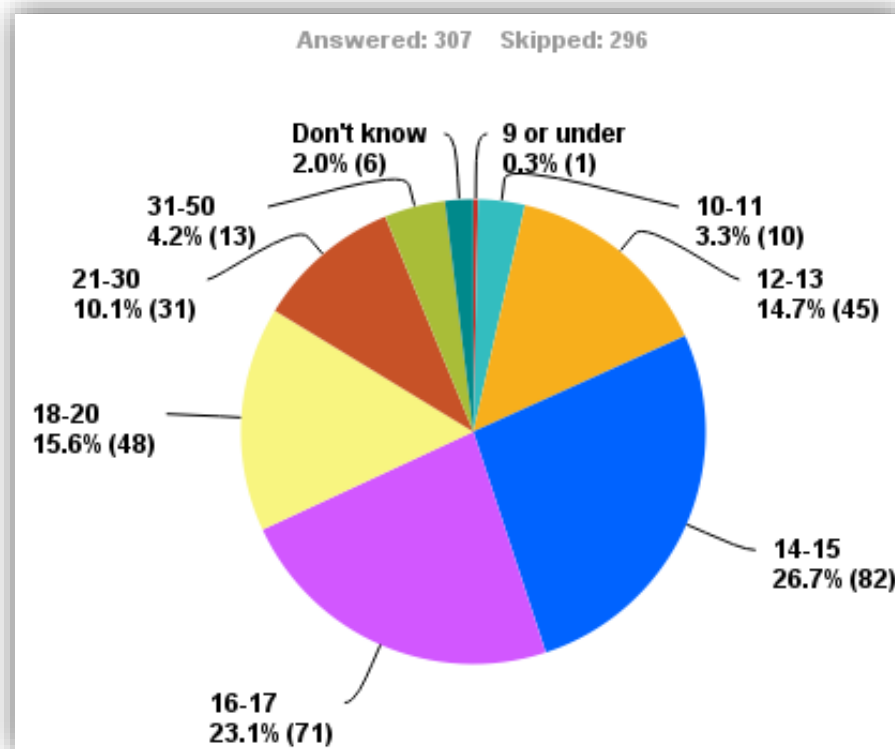


Chart 22 How old were you when you first encountered SGI pornography online?

Of 307 SGI users answering, the two largest responses in Chart 22 were those aged 14-15 at 26.7% (82/307), and 16-17, on 23.1% (71/307). When combined, this is just short of half (49.8%, 151/307) of all respondents who answered. A significant finding from Chart 22 is that nearly half of the active SGI users in Stage 1, had first seen this type of image when they were still legally a child, in UK law. But remember, it is not illegal in the UK for children to view pornography/SGI's, if those who feature in it are over eighteen. These findings indicate that half of the adults in the Stage 1 survey had seen

SGI's as children. This amateur pornography bell cannot now be un-rung, and most of the SOECA officers interviewed believed that public-health campaigns and an improvement of PSHE/SRE in schools, were the way to proceed to protect children and adults from the online risks represented by SGI use, as will be seen shortly.

All five respondents from the Stage 3 interviews expressed concerns over the impact of children viewing SGI's. In Oliver's words:

"I think most of the images I've seen are harmless but there's the odd ones that show a girl getting, or almost looks like she's been forced into it, or young lads can see that and think that's the norm. A lot of the stuff is voluntary but some of the stuff is a bit violent, it just can show, young lads, I suppose could be easily affected by that and think that's the norm, can think they can go around doing that".

A crosstab of gender, and the age at which respondents first saw online SGI's, is shown in Table 9:

Table 9 Crosstab of age and gender, in which pornographic SGI's were first seen

	9 or under (1)	10- 11 (2)	12-13 (3)	14-15 (4)	16-17 (5)	18-20 (6)	21-30 (7)	31- 50 (8)	51+ (9)	Don't know (10)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	0.5% 1	2.2% 4	16.2% 30	28.6% 53	20.0% 37	11.9% 22	12.4% 23	5.4% 10	0.0% 0	2.7% 5	62.3% 185
Q3: Female (B)	0.0% 0	4.5% 5	12.5% 14	24.1% 27	25.9% 29	22.3% 25	7.1% 8	2.7% 3	0.0% 0	0.9% 1	37.7% 112
Total Respondents	1	9	44	80	66	47	31	13	0	6	297

The combined 9-11 ages were skipped for having too few respondents to warrant analysis. Table 9 saw males being first exposed to SGI's, in the amalgamated 12-15 categories, at approximately 4% more than females. Conversely, females first saw an SGI more than males, in the 16-20 age range, and nearly double in 18-20 banding. More

males 62.2% (185/297), than females 37.7% (112/297), see SGI's at all, and they do so at a younger age (12-15), while females become more exposed to them in their late-teens; the results are statistically significant ($p=.000$). Such findings mirror a great deal of existent research showing diverging general online pornography use, between the genders, perhaps indicating that SGI's have become incorporated as a normative element of online pornography viewing, for both adolescents and adults, although far more prevalent for males of all ages.

A crosstab for sexuality, and the age when respondents first saw SGI's, is displayed in Table 10, with the diminutive other sexuality category (0.2% - 15/603), excluded:

Table 10 Crosstab of age in which SGI's were first seen, and sexuality

	9 or under (1)	10- 11 (2)	12-13 (3)	14-15 (4)	16-17 (5)	18-20 (6)	21-30 (7)	31- 50 (8)	51+ (9)	Don't know (10)	Total
Q4: Heterosexual (Straight) (A)	0.0% 0	3.0% 3	6.9% 7	21.8% 22	19.8% 20	20.8% 21	16.8% 17	9.9% 10	0.0% 0	1.0% 1	36.3% 101
Q4: Homosexual (Gay or Lesbian) (B)	0.0% 0	3.1% 4	20.5% 26	30.7% 39	23.6% 30	11.0% 14	7.9% 10	1.6% 2	0.0% 0	1.6% 2	45.7% 127
Q4: Bisexual (C)	2.0% 1	4.0% 2	16.0% 8	26.0% 13	30.0% 15	10.0% 5	6.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	6.0% 3	18.0% 50
Total Respondents	1	9	41	74	65	40	30	12	0	6	278

Table 10 showed that in the two LGBT categories, early exposure to SGI's in both the 12-13 and 14-15 age ranges, is far more pronounced than for heterosexuals. Indeed, gay 12-13's, first saw SGI's at almost triple the rate of straights (20.5% Vs 6.9%), while for bisexuals in the same age range, it was 16%. The conclusion from this statistically significant link ($p=.000$), is irrefutable, LGBT's use SGI's far more frequently than heterosexuals, and began doing so at an appreciably younger age, too.

Harry addressed the question of whether gay children could potentially learn anything from their earlier, and more extensive, SGI experiences:

“Every experience you have in life is informative and teaches you a lesson...I guess if it was for sixteen-year-olds, the images would need to be age appropriate...But again, through these images...you may learn a lot about various practices and to some extent they can be informative. To what extent they can be a positive source of information that is questionable...Self-Generated Images might give you a perception about how people may look like in the real world”.

The findings in [Table 10](#), which revealed the more vigorous LGBT use of SGI's, were worth scrutinizing through the ideas of the NSM theorists, raised earlier (Buechler, 1995; Pichardo, 1997). LGBT equality in western societies has advanced appreciably since the advent of old style published pornography, embodied by 'skin' mags like 'Playboy', launched in 1953, and which became widespread in the 1970's (Paasonen, 2011). Now, alongside the evolution of pornography's online scion, and the recent growth of SGI's, LGBT equality has accelerated to such a degree that same-sex marriage has been legal in the UK since 2013, one of twenty-four countries where it is now legal (Saul, 2014; Pew Research Centre, 2015). The highly controversial causal inference here is that online pornography, and latterly its SGI's variant, have been contributing to this move to greater equality for some minorities. The same logic also applies to women, where greater access to pornography has also arrived concurrently with legal measures banning gender discrimination inequalities, all now embodied in the 2010 Equality Act in the UK, but commencing with the Equal Pay Act of 1970 (Butler, 2016). Both sexuality and gender are among the many 'protected characteristics' forbidding discrimination on those grounds, by the Equality Act.

Anti-porn feminists of the Dworkin/MacKinnon (1989;1989) school, find themselves with some impossible theoretical contradictions to resolve consequently; if all pornography is patriarchal and misogynist, then how have women's social, economic and political rights advanced so far, simultaneously with online pornography's ever greater dissemination and use?

The same logic appertains to LGBT use of SGI's/online pornography. For, if all pornography is 'rape' (Morgan, 2014), why have these identity groups embracing of it, come alongside greater legal rights and anti-discriminatory measures?

Positive & negative experiences with SGI's

Chart 23 shows only 9/311 SGI users' (2.9%), recorded an overall negative experience with their images.

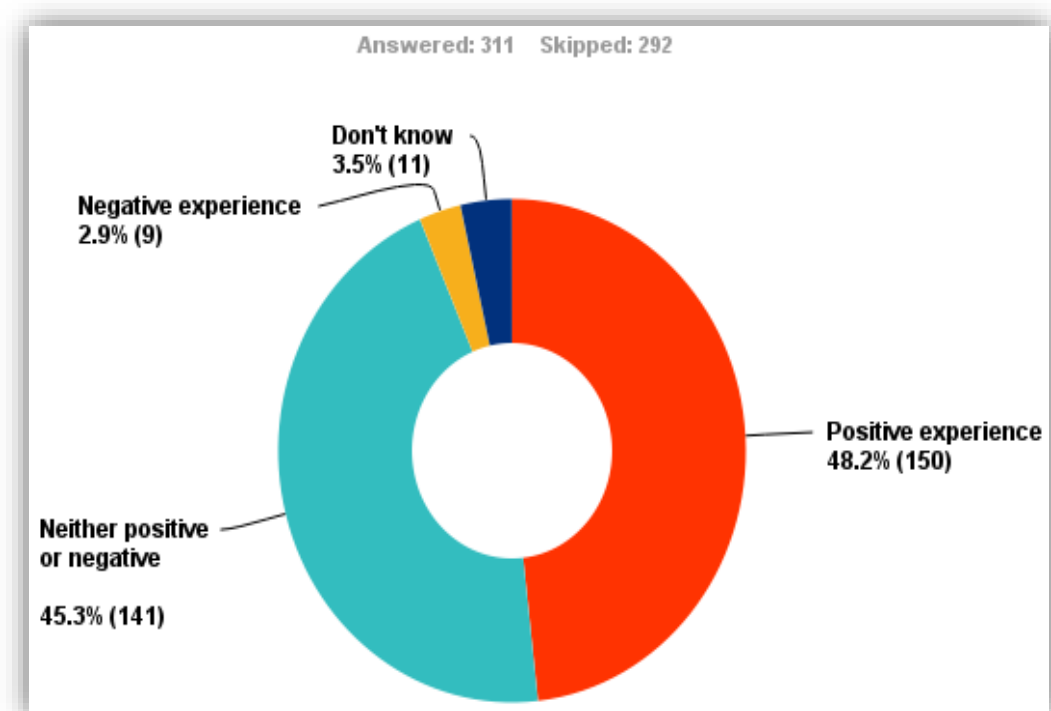


Chart 23 Has your experience with SGI's been mainly positive or negative?

Nearly one-third of the sample, in Chart 19, who regarded SGI's as 'a big problem', appear to have succumbed to an unfounded neurosis about SGI's relative dangers, which in no way reflects the empirical evidence from the experiences of this survey's active users, as illustrated in Chart 23, and its lowly 2.9% of users with negative experiences. It may well be fair to conclude that both SGI's and online pornography have been unjustly labelled as one of the chief contemporary 'Folk Devils' of modern

Britain, alongside other candidates, like Muslims and immigrants etc. (Cohen, 2011). Online 'Pornophobia' may be being whipped-up into a contemporary and powerful Moral Panic, by a mephitic unholy alliance comprised of: pro-censorship advocates, the mass media, big internet corporations looking to hawk expensive blocking and filtering software to worried parents, anti-porn feminists, New-Right/neo-conservative nuclear family promoters, and finally, Christian fundamentalists (particularly in the US), who equate all pornography with moral corruption.

Such an analysis of these SGI findings takes us right back to the general debate over online pornography, in terms of free speech Vs censorship, raised in the literature review of this thesis. In the survey, to return to findings, an underwhelming minority of only 2.9% (9/311) of online SGI users, in [Chart 23](#), had an overall negative experience with their materials. When adults engaged with legal online SGI's in this sample, many more derived pleasure from doing so, as evidenced by the 48.2% (150/311), who recorded an overall positive experience. Obviously, any negative experiences with SGI's are not inconsequential for those fewer adults concerned, as these potentially entail becoming the victims of several damaging cyber-crimes such as: sextortion, cyber-blackmail, revenge porn, cyber-bullying/trolling, cyber-stalking and online CSA etc.; although they could alternatively, just be feeling shocked, uncomfortable or sickened by what they had seen, rather than being the victim of an SGI related crime. It must be recognized that opponents of online pornography/SGI's utterly reject the premise that this material is 'speech' at all, and consequently deem it ineligible for citizens to be entitled to watch it or make it, as part of their democratic liberties for freedom of expression. Such a view that can be traced back to the attempts to ban 'Hustler' magazine in the US for obscenity in the 1970's, after some were outraged by it being the first domestic magazine to publish a colour picture of a woman's vulva (Flynt, 1997).

One further important caveat needs to be made, about the harm that SGI's can potentially cause. The voices of current children aged seventeen and under, are not present in these fieldworks findings, which relate only to adults and their uses of

online pornography/SGI's. However, some respondents who may have experienced the criminal abuse of their SGI's in the past, when they were children, will have now become adults, and so their views and experiences have been captured by the survey and Stage 3 interviews. The many dangers of SGI's for current children are examined more fully in chapter eight, when the vocational experiences of the five serving SOECA officers, come to the fore.

Attitudes towards SGI's

Opinions about the dangers of SGI's being a big problem in modern society, were almost evenly divided among the Stage 1 sample in Chart 19. The exact figures being 32.6% (194/596) agreeing that SGI's are a big problem, 35.7% (213/596) disagreeing, and 31.7% (189/596) neutral. When it is considered that the survey sample is more skewed towards younger people, who use online pornography more frequently than older age categories, then this finding does reveal a significant strand of public anxiety about the issue, in the sample.

A crosstab was conducted of those who have/have not used online pornography in the last six months and those who thought that SGI's are a big problem in society, with the results presented in Table 11:

Table 11 Crosstab of those who do (Yes) and do not (No) use online pornography, and seeing SGI's as a big problem in society

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q11: Agree Strongly (A)	21.6% 19	78.4% 69	14.9% 88
Q11: Agree (B)	43.8% 46	56.2% 59	17.8% 105
Q11: Neither Agree or Disagree (C)	67.6% 125	32.4% 60	31.4% 185
Q11: Disagree (D)	86.9% 119	13.1% 18	23.3% 137
Q11: Strongly Disagree (E)	89.2% 66	10.8% 8	12.6% 74
Total Respondents	375	214	589

Table 11 revealed that those who do not ('No') use online pornography are far more likely to see SGI's as a big problem, with 78.4% of these strongly agreeing that SGI's are a big problem; whereas only 21.6% of those who do use online pornography concurred. Of the online pornography users, 89.2% strongly disagreed that SGI's are a big problem, while among the non-users, the figure was only 10.8% ($p=.000$). The findings from Table 11, allow us to reach this important conclusion, that the greater the online pornography usage, the less SGI's are regarded as a problem, and vice versa. Those most afraid and anxious about SGI's, are the non-users. Perhaps fear of the unknown, or ignorance of the real nature of the material, is the key driver of Pornophobia among the abstainers in society?

The SOECA officers were split four to one, about the role of online pornography/SGI's for adults in society. Officer 1, proved to be the most pessimistic and discordant, in his views:

"I can't see anything positive about that at all...I would say to that adult...consider the serious consequences that might occur with that image, once it's out of your control. And, if someone is asking you to do that, you should ask yourself why they are asking you to do that...the risks far outweigh the immediate pleasure that may occur".

While the other four officers were more in harmony with Officer 3's sentiments, about adult legal online pornography:

"I do think it can be used positively, I think it can be done in the right way to inform people what's right or wrong..."

SGL's as a 'Gateway' to offending with IloC's & CSA

The conjecture exists that one of the chief dangers of SGL's, is that they could act as a 'gateway' for users into firstly, more extreme online pornography and then ultimately onto illegal engagements with IloC's. The theory has many similarities with the argument that the 'soft' drug cannabis²³, can lead users into using harder ones, such as heroin or cocaine²⁴. This gateway supposition infers that SGL use can then progress towards viewing, downloading and possessing IloC's, all non-contact offences; and for some, creating their own visual records of CSA that they themselves perpetrated, and then possibly sent online to another contact. This latter is a far more serious, contact offence of CSA.

The survey respondents were asked about whether SGL's use can lead to online offending with IloC's, and the replies can be seen in [Chart 24](#).

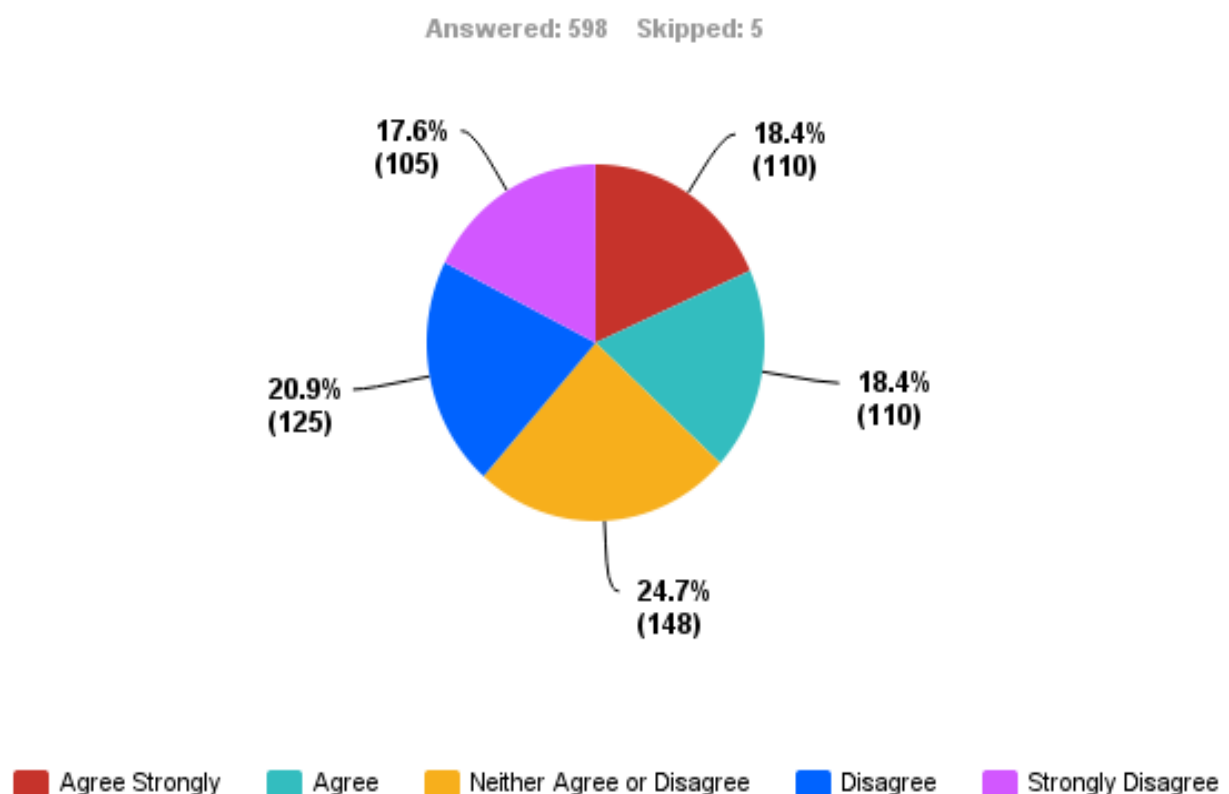


Chart 24 SGL's can lead users to online offending with Indecent Images of Children (IloC's)

²³ A Class B controlled substance in the UK, under the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act

²⁴ Both Class A controlled substances under the same Act

There appears to be no clear outcome, from the 598 responses in [Chart 24](#), considering SGI's role in leading to criminal offending with IIoC's, with all five categories having received approximately similar answers.

Pornography, as a gateway to greater offending has been a theory which has existed for many years. When Robin Morgan (2014) equated all pornography with rape, she was championing a variety of this hypothesis, one focussing on how sexual violence in adult heterosexual pornography leads to more sexual violence, in the male viewer. However, the theory was anecdotal, assuming more extreme pornography leads to greater sexual violence, and a review of the available secondary research by Fergusson and Hartley (2009, p. 323) determined that:

'it is time to discard the hypothesis that pornography contributes to increased sexual assault behaviour'.

There were mixed feelings among the SOECA officers, surrounding the notion that online pornography/SGI's can act as a gateway to escalated offending with IIoC's. Officer 4 divulged:

"I personally don't believe in the whole gateway idea myself. I do think that if someone has a predilection for sexual interest in children, that is what they have.... I don't believe that if you are looking at babies, pictures of a child, that you are then over the years, progress into penetrative imagery of a child. I think this is more obviously likely one and the same thing, you have a sexual interest in a child full stop, be them clothed or be them naked, you know, you have a sexual interest in that child...there has to be that desire at the start. I don't think it's something that's going to be created by...illegal images of children".

Such views contrasted with the feelings of the other interviewed officers who were more attuned to the ideas of Officer 3:

"To a degree adults, fine, they can get up to what they want to, the problem is, what I'm seeing online is, what we experience is the people who are adults-wise, pushing the boundaries, can sometimes push the boundaries too far, increasingly more people seem to be extending their boundaries...they are not out and out paedophiles as such, they are people pushing the boundaries".

Officer 3's thoughts raised some uncomfortable issues about policing online CSA and IIOC's in the UK. Should limited police resources be targeted at non-contact offenders, who may be viewing and downloading such images? Or, should those who carry out contact CSA crimes against children, and possibly then share the images online, be the focus of police investigations, resources and specialist staff, like those at SOECA? In a perfect world, there would be resources in police budgets for both types of crime investigations, but following the recent 'credit crunch' of 2008, there has been a cut of 15,500 police staff posts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or a 19.5% reduction since 2010 (APCC, 2015), in response to successive government austerity budgets. Units like SOECA seem faced with an unenviable choice about where to target their shrinking resources.

On this subject, Officer 3 was highly critical of current Home Office driven policing priorities for tackling online CSA, child grooming and IIOC's:

"The current approach seems to be attacking people using peer-to-peer (P2P). It is my view that that is not the right approach, people who are sharing Indecent Images on P2P were targeted. It is at the moment, that's where we are being driven...what that doesn't include is the people going online, going on Twitter, going on FB, sharing images, meeting people, chatting. The people that are approaching kids saying go on webcam and do this etc. ...or the people that have gone onto these sex sites we mentioned, or the specific paedophilic sites that are out there, exchanging images, or the closed W0nderland or TOR type ones. Well what are we going to be doing about all that lot...it needs a totally different approach."

Scooping-up non-contact online sex offenders, by tracing their P2P file/image sharing activities (via Torrent sites), is relatively undemanding police-work, which generates high numbers of low-level offenders; while simultaneously allowing more serious online contact child abusers, to remain un-investigated, and able to continue their criminal activities.

The diversity of opinion on the matter of SGI's dangers, is of interest to policy makers in the UK, as the government is about to change its instructions to police forces on how they should deal with children who send sexualised images of themselves to their boyfriends and girlfriends, or who post such images on their SNS/messaging apps. Ministers are instructing police not to prosecute such incidents, as they have now become 'a natural part of modern growing up' (Espinoza, 2015). Most SGI's produced by children in the UK, will not lead to the original child-creators being criminalised, and their names placed on both the sex offenders register, and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) records; such a move would blight the career prospects of many teenage offenders for life. Although, in practice, the police and CPS have been adopting this stance for a few years now. As Officer 2 explained:

"I don't think anyone actually gets dealt with as a criminal, not in my experience...they are given words of advice about where the photos could end up...so technically they are breaking the law but...sometimes they need to be treated as a victim, as they are a child, but they are probably unaware of the consequences, unaware where the images could end up and, out of naivety, they are thinking that this is acceptable behaviour".

Making SGI's in the future?

When the survey respondents were asked to cogitate upon whether they might ever produce and publish online, SGI's of themselves, the results are seen in Chart 25. A resounding 'no' was produced with 66% (394/597), and only 11.6% (69/597) answered in the affirmative, although the 'maybe' category registered 15.7% (94/597). Around one-sixth of respondents might be open to SGI creation in future years.

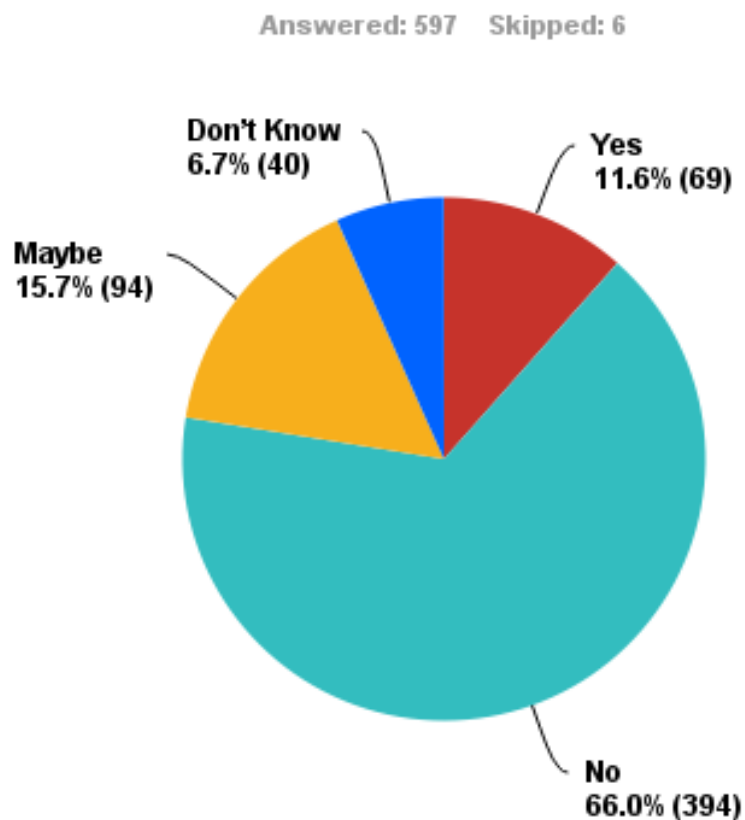


Chart 25 Can you ever foresee a future scenario where you might produce an SGI?

A crosstab of possible future SGI creation and sexuality (excluding the 'other' category), in [Chart 26](#), shows how much more engaged the LGBT respondents in Stage 1 were with these images.

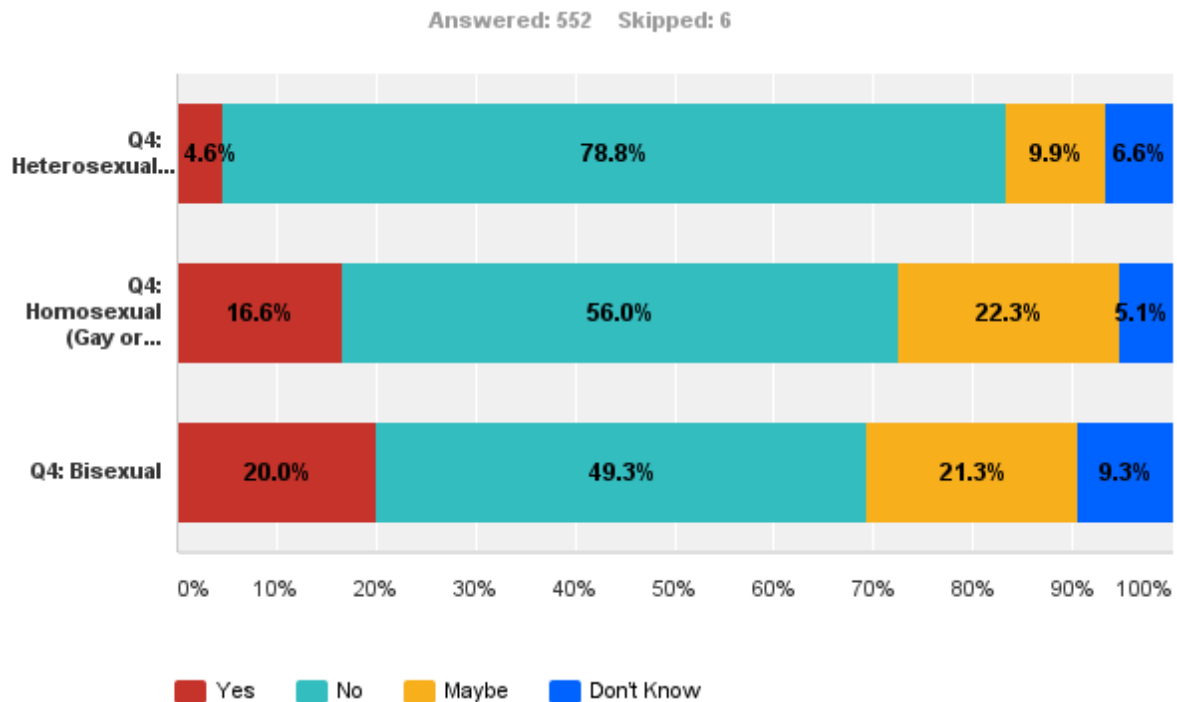


Chart 26 Crosstab of sexuality and 'can you ever foresee a future scenario where you might produce an SGI'

In [Chart 26](#), 20% of bisexuals, and 16.6% of homosexuals, indicated that they could see themselves making and distributing SGI's in the future, as compared to only 4.6% of the heterosexuals; a wide divergence in attitudes towards SGI's was uncovered by the statistically significant findings ($p=.000$). It may be this disparity between different sexualities confirms the liberation theory of the NSM theorists (Pichardo, 1997), outlined earlier, whereby online pornography is viewed as a path towards greater freedom and civil rights for minorities and oppressed groups (i.e. women, LGBT, ethnic minorities, the disabled or fetish aficionados etc.). Online viewing and creation of SGI's, would accordingly be interpreted as platforms to legitimate and affirm LGBT sexuality; equalize their power in society; or at its most instrumental level, enhance their ability to meet others with similar sexual inclinations. Online pornography/SGI's may have furnished a potent weapon, employed to achieve LGBT empowerment and equality, an armament which contained far more puissance than any mere gun. Such an interpretation from a NSM perspective directly refutes the old order, identity

politics and protests have achieved liberation, from the bottom, including the adoption of online pornography/SGI's. Mao Zedong's (2004) famous '*political power grows out of the barrel of a gun*' words, may never have been more obsolete. SGI's may be emerging, in the west, as one element in a successful revolt against homophobia and discrimination, without a shot being fired, although the rioters at the Stonewall bar in 1969 might disagree about the role of physical resistance in the struggle (Duberman, 1994). LGBT's heftier use of SGI's, are not without their dark side however, as will be soon become evident.

In a corresponding manner, online SNS's were used to launch, and sustain ordinary peoples' uprisings, during the 'Arab Spring', that toppled oppressive dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and created an ongoing insurrection against Assad's regime in Syria, although ominously most of these have now turned sour (Danahar, 2013).

Attitudes towards greater censorship and restrictions on SGI's

When respondents in Stage 1 were asked if they wanted greater government restrictions on SGI's, their replies are displayed in [Chart 27](#):

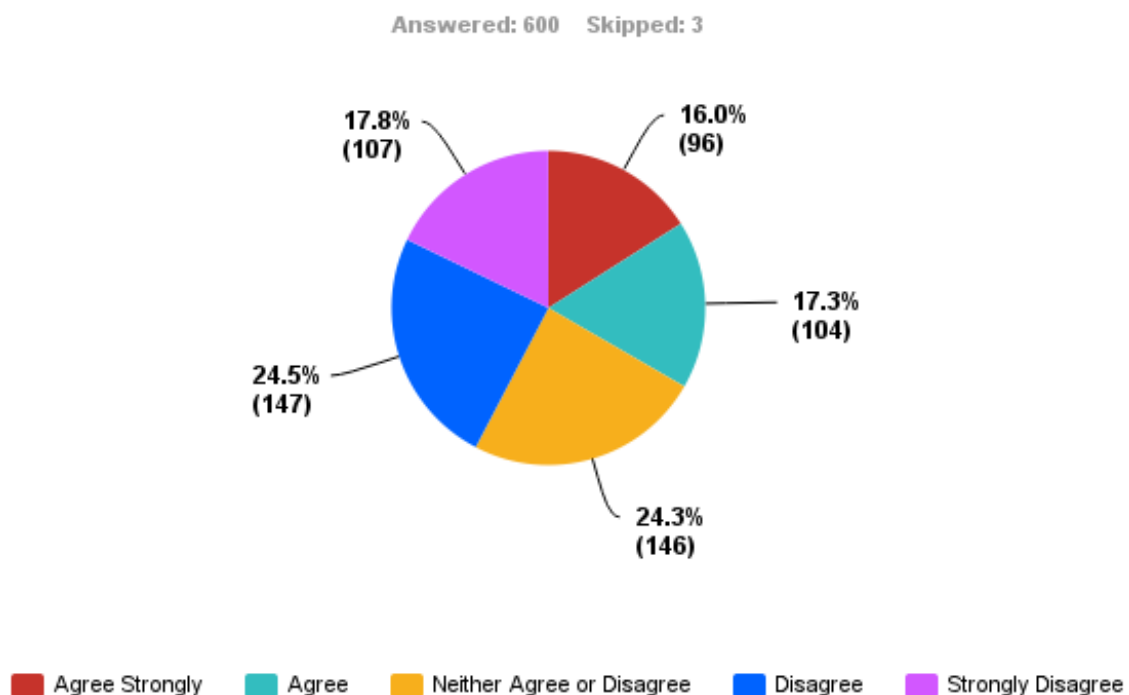


Chart 27 The ability to make your own SGI's should be controlled more tightly by the government

The combined agrees in [Chart 27](#), looking for greater censorship and blocking of SGI's, totalled 33.3% (200/600) and the combined disagrees showed 42.3% (254/300), with the remaining 24.3% (146/600) neutral; a 9% plurality for those who oppose greater censorship on SGI's. One caveat needs to be made about these findings, that far more young adults (20-29's) took part in the survey, than any other age groups, possibly skewing the results against the government being more censorious with SGI's.

A crosstab for greater censorship of SGI's and different age groups, is displayed in [Table 12](#); with over sixties excluded due to low numbers.

Table 12 Crosstab of age, and the ability to make your own SGI's should be controlled more tightly by the Government

	Agree Strongly (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Total
Q2: 19 or under (A)	16.7% 10	11.7% 7	18.3% 11	33.3% 20	20.0% 12	10.1% 60
Q2: 20-29 (B)	14.4% 56	16.9% 66	24.1% 94	24.9% 97	19.7% 77	65.3% 390
Q2: 30-39 (C)	15.9% 11	14.5% 10	21.7% 15	27.5% 19	20.3% 14	11.6% 69
Q2: 40-49 (D)	17.5% 10	26.3% 15	31.6% 18	17.5% 10	7.0% 4	9.5% 57
Q2: 50-59 (E)	38.1% 8	28.6% 6	33.3% 7	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	3.5% 21
Total Respondents	95	104	145	146	107	597

The under-twenties in [Table 12](#) agreed that there should be more government censorship of SGI's at the combined rate of 28.4%, (17/60), while the figure for the 40-49's was 43.8% (25/57) and 66.7% (14/21) for the 50-59's (p=.014). The older the respondents, the greater the support for governmental blocking of SGI's, the oldest category, supporting such a move at more than twice the rate of the youngest. These age differences over attitudes to greater censorship of SGI's, may be interpreted in two

ways: either, that people become more socially and politically conservative as they age, or, more radically, as evidence for the existence of a hypothesized, 'generational war'. The actuality of a much wider inter-generational conflict in the UK was propounded by former ex-Tory Minister, David Willetts (2010), who maintained that, in terms of: pensions, housing, welfare benefits, jobs and health services, the ageing 'Baby Boomer' generation (born between 1945-64), were stealing the future from today's young people (Generations X, Y and the Millennials). The hypothesis can be plausibly extended, in the light of the findings in [Table 12](#), to encapsulate online pornography/SGI's too. For, it is the middle-aged and older generations, who hold the social policy making power on this issue, in opposition to what the massive majority of youth desire, and are doing, with their online connected devices. The average age of MP's in the 2015 intake was fifty-one; 71% of them were male, 93.4% white, and 40% of Conservative MP's were privately educated, contrasting with 11% of Labour's (Bengtsson, et al., 2015). Willetts' contention of an inter-generational conflict could also apply to the idea of discussing issues surrounding online pornography/SGI's, as educational tools during augmented school PSHE/SRE lessons; they could be used to enable children to find out more about sex and relationships, how to have better, safer sex, and for the promotion of enhanced online digital privacy, and health and safety. However, they undoubtedly will not be, as the ageing Baby Boomers in government refuse to countenance the necessary reforms to facilitate this, their age-withered hands steadfastly refusing to push the levers of powers to make it happen.

A crosstab of more government censorship of SGI's, with gender, is revealed in [Table 13](#):

Table 13 Crosstab of gender, and the ability to make your own SGI's should be controlled more tightly by the Government

	Agree Strongly (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	10.6% 31	13.4% 39	23.6% 69	29.1% 85	23.3% 68	49.9% 292
Q3: Female (B)	21.5% 63	22.2% 65	25.3% 74	19.8% 58	11.3% 33	50.1% 293
Total Respondents	94	104	143	143	101	585

[Table 13](#) demonstrated that females wanted the government to further restrict online SGI's at 43.7% (128/293), while for males it was 24% (70/292), a ratio approaching two-to-one (combined figures for agrees) ($p=.000$). This massive attitudinal imbalance between the genders towards more SGI censorship, mirrored the gender disparities in the use online pornography/amateur images, seen in both [Chart 13](#) and [Table 2](#).

Conclusions

The first aim of this chapter was to investigate and discover the major types of SGI's that are used by a large sample of users. The result of this was the identification of a six-category classification, comprising SGI's used on: hooking-up apps; on pornographic Tube websites; as selfies in sexting; on webcams for camsex; on SNS's and messaging/image apps; and, finally, when abused in the hands of online criminals.

A second aim of the chapter was to uncover levels of general online pornography use and engagement with SGI's. [Chart 12](#) revealed that 63.4% of 595 respondents in Stage 1 had used online pornography in the last six months; while [Chart 11](#) disclosed that

there were 317 (53%) active SGI users among the total sample of 603, and that 26.5% (84/317) of them had created and sent online, a sexualised image of themselves.

Wide differentials in SGI use were also uncovered, with gay and bisexual men, males and the younger-ages, all having much higher engagement rates, than their corresponding groups.

The platform where most active SGI users saw their materials, was the PornTube websites, and they did so mostly as passive consumers rather than creators. The next largest category were SGI selfies. Gay men and bisexuals created many more SGI's than any other group, and frequently did so for sending the still images to others, while seeking casual sex on hooking-up apps.

The final aim of the chapter was to seek out the views and experiences of various groups on SGI's: it was discovered that non-pornography users were more anxious about the issue than users, and that very few users had any negative experiences with their engagement with the amateur images they had interacted with. This severely understated the enormous hazard which SGI's can represent for children and vulnerable adults, when they are abused by online criminals. Although the numbers for this are relatively small, the consequences can be lethal; a point brought to light with the findings from the Stage 2 interviews, but which is returned to in far greater depth in chapter eight of this work.

The next chapter moves on to an examination of the dyadic nature of SGI's. On the one hand, many greatly enjoy their activities while using them, but a minority have endured a far murkier experience. To reflect this binary pleasure/pain symbiosis, chapter seven is entitled, 'SGI's: The deadly embrace'.

Chapter 7

SGI's: The deadly embrace

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the duality of the SGI's phenomenon for users. Much of this use is in the successful pursuit of pleasure, but sometimes the opposite effect is the consequence, and distress, unhappiness, and pain are the result. This process will entail a comprehensive analysis of the various online platforms with which SGI's are engaged, and the uses to which the images are put.

Gay and bisexual men's use of SGI's will form a separate section of this chapter, to reflect the greater intensity with which these groups passively consume SGI's online, but also to explore their far more advanced levels of creation of them too. Furthermore, the way these two groups utilize their SGI's is radically different from the heterosexual experience. The nature, extent and implications of this discovery, with its positive and negative ramifications, will also be evaluated.

SGI's: The platforms used

[Chart 10](#) revealed that the highest engagement rate with online SGI's, among 317 active users in Stage 1, was on the PornTube websites (61.2%), while the second most popular was with sexualised selfies (56.2%). However, these findings display only which platform was accessed, or type of SGI's engaged with, rather than the purpose that they were employed for. [Chart 23](#) demonstrated that 2.9% (9/311) had an overall negative experience with their SGI use, in contrast to 48.2% (150/311), who indicated a mainly positive experience, a ratio of approximately twelve to one. It is evident that the clear majority of SGI users were using their images to have predominantly pleasurable experiences.

Table 4 divulged the multiple online platforms where, between 299 and 312 active SGI users saw their images; the three categories are ‘yes’, they have seen material there, ‘no’ they have not, and a third column for those respondents who had never used that platform.

Accessing SGI’s from the many PornTube sites, was the preeminent mode in Table 4, with 87.8% or 274/312, second was erotic blogs/fiction on 44.1% (132/299), confirming the ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’ effect, then webcam link-ups, on 34.2% (104/304), then hook-up sites, on 31.8% (97/305). The data for SNS’s, with 29.8% (93/312), and the image and messaging apps (WhatsApp - 25.2%, and Snapchat - 20.9%) are perhaps the most surprising findings. This is because the SNS’s and messaging/image apps, are not dedicated to pornography/SGI’s, and are set up primarily for online networking, socialising and non-sexual photo sharing, and not to distribute pornography. Therefore, the appearance of sexually explicit SGI’s materials, in such quantities, on members’ newsfeeds/timelines, could be disturbing to view and dangerous to those who created the images. This might be the case if the SGI’s were unasked for, intrusive or inappropriate, say for adolescents. However, many users choose to voluntarily sign-up to follow/like pornography apps and websites, or be friends with people and groups that are certainly going to be posting sexual material. Straight Dave, described his use of Omegle, an app that allows you to text/webcam random strangers around the world:

“I’ve had chats on Omegle and I always ask are you a certain age, and sometimes people like a nice chat, a naughty chat and that can be fun...Omegle tends to be just text...I like the word thing...in a sense you have a word with someone, then you have a bit of fun from it”.

With Table 4 showing just short of one-in-three SNS users seeing SGI’s on those platforms, WhatsApp one-in-five, and Snapchat one-in-four, the possible implications of this revelation are staggering. This is even more true, when it is considered that these findings are just for SGI’s, not general, commercial, adult online pornography, which is much more pervasive than its amateur scion. Facebook alone, the most

popular SNS, had 1.59 billion AMU's, out of the worlds estimated 7.4 billion people, and that is just the leading app, ahead of a plethora of 'lesser' ones, including YouTube and WhatsApp, both with more than one billion AMU's (Statista, 2015; Worldometers, 2016). The fieldwork findings of this study, in terms of SGI viewing on SNS's (29.8%), WhatsApp (25.2%) and Snapchat (20.9%), provide data which a Marxist analysis would cite as evidence of how capitalism cynically co-opts everything for its own purposes. So, the SNS's and messaging/image apps, have been subsumed to become the latest delivery mechanisms for online pornography (Caffentzis, 2005). Even voluntarily made and uploaded SGI's and 'free-porn', suckle the incubus of the exploitative capitalist economic system, as they are enmeshed in advertising, paid-for data mining, and 'click-bait' temptations for the unwary to buy services or goods. Social media can be seen, from this perspective, as one of the platforms upon which capitalism has abrogated to itself: sex, pleasure, joy, desire and libido, etc.

SGI's: More gain than pain?

The most vigorous SGI use is on the PornTube sites in [Table 4](#), where undoubtedly a great deal of pleasure is derived by visitors in pursuit of auto-erotic stimulation; whereas only 2.9% (9/311) of SGI users reported negative experiences in [Chart 23](#).

The five Stage 3 interviewees also reported few negative experiences with their SGI viewing or creation. Such overall findings seem out-of-sorts with the many claims that online pornography can lead to young males pressuring their partners for earlier sex, more sex, or kinkier sex, such as BDSM or anal. Another common trope not borne out by these findings is the view that online pornography can lead male users to have distorted views about how women should look, such as shaved erogenous zones or breast size.

One interesting claim about the negative impact of 'online pornography addiction' on young men was recently made by the NHS psychosexual therapist Angela Gregory (Mundie, 2016). She asserted that there had seen more young males under thirty, in the last six years, referred to her for erectile dysfunction problems. The cause of this,

Gregory asserted, was not physiological, but rather due to their alleged addiction to online pornography, although she had no empirical evidence to back-up her anecdotal opinions. Her theory is: too much auto-erotic sex with online pornography, could lead to more cases of debilitating ‘performance anxiety’ among young men, when faced with physical sex with another person, rather than masturbating over online pornography. Another contributing factor could be, the off-putting pre-coital recognition, that commercial pornography’s plastic and shaved pulchritudinous models, do not resemble what most real women look like when naked. SGI’s, with their ‘Realcore’ authenticity (Messina, 2010), featuring enthusiastic amateurs, cannot be accused of this latter misrepresentation. Ironically, Realcore SGI’s may provide an equally effective cure to erectile dysfunction as Viagra, in contrast to the fake-chimera of plastic commercial adult-entertainment.

The findings in [Table 4](#) suggest that online pornography/SGI’s have, partially, subverted the SNS’s/messaging apps to their own ends, contributing to the process whereby culture and the mass media in the west have become highly sexualized and imbued with ‘Porno-Chic’ (McNair, 2013). In a very different analysis to the Marxist one (Caffentzis, 2005), the pornosphere is perceived instead to have spread its ‘striptease culture’ into the mainstream media, not primarily for the needs of capitalism, but instead for the sexual liberation, pleasure and joy of users.

Bisexual Oliver recounted his experiences with SNS’s/messaging/image apps, and pornography/SGI’s:

“Well there’s videos on this one (Snapchat) but they last for about thirty seconds at the most... you can’t save them, if it’s a picture you can screenshot it and keep it, the whole idea of Snapchat is that you can see it for a certain amount of time and then it’s gone forever...Freaky Submit it just comes up daily. I don’t watch it when it comes up, certain videos come up and I watch it at the end of the day, then you can get five or ten minutes’ worth of viewing out of it, depending on how many videos have been loaded up that day”.

Likewise, the private messaging features of SNS's/messaging/image apps could be used by those who have indulged in sexting erotic and sexual images, another aspect of the proliferation of pornography/SGI's, on those platforms.

It is undoubtedly too late to hold back the onrushing online pornography/SGI tsunami, but how governments, internet companies, law enforcement agencies, religions, schools, parents and individuals, deal with the consequences is now imperative. Ignoring the issues surrounding SGI/online pornography use is both reckless and negligent. Whereas, dealing effectively with issues like: the promotion of greater awareness of online health and safety, security, and digital privacy, are all desperately needed measures in policy makers' responses. School PSHE/SRE classes, and public health/information campaigns are necessary for this, particularly ones that enable parents to talk to their children more effectively about these issues. Those who advocate banning, blocking, censorship or greater restrictions on online pornography/SGI's, risk emulating King Canute, who vainly, and apocryphally, attempted to prevent a tidal inundation, by commanding it to stop.

The whole concept of censorship and blocking online pornography/SGI's from SNS's and messaging/image apps may be otiose, as WhatsApp, with one billion AMU's, recently introduced end-to-end unbreakable encryption for all its users; meaning that it is impossible for anyone, governments, the police, and even the app's owner (which is now Facebook), to decrypt anything exchanged by its users (Yadron, 2016; Statista, 2016). The diptych implications of this technical advance in encryption, are startling. Privacy, personal online security and digital safety are all buttressed immeasurably by this innovation in end-to-end encryption of message contents, including any images sent. Just cogitate about its potential uses for protesters in Syria, Egypt and Russia. Commensurately, criminals can also now pursue their activities on WhatsApp, free from police or government prying, opening-up vast new opportunities for online producers, traders, sellers, buyers and viewers of ILoC's. Furthermore, as WhatsApp was purchased by Facebook in 2014, its ground-breaking encryption technology is planned to be introduced on that SNS soon, too (Frier, 2014).

Oliver's account, of online pornography usage on WhatsApp, divulged its sheer ubiquitous banality:

"I'd say for men, young boys, I'd say it's a normal thing to do now...When I was young it's wasn't easily readily available as it is now, but I would say, yes, it's normal for me to look at porn. Even for my football team, we share porn clips all the time on our group WhatsApp chat. Yes, it's quite normal. A lot of it, again is weird porn so, but yes it's just normal. I don't see, someone showing me an image porn, I don't find it out of the ordinary, I find it normal to see it now. It's not so much a taboo subject with me. Obviously, I don't talk to women about it".

Online dating websites like 'eHarmony' etc., seem to have relatively low use of SGI's, with only 9.8% (30/135), per [Table 4](#). Tinder too, per this research, seems to be used chiefly as a dating app by heterosexuals and not as a hooking-up site, contrasting strongly with how homosexual/bisexual men use Grindr. Among online daters, sending SGI's does not seem to be the norm. Those seeing SGI's on dating sites coming a lowly tenth out of the twelve options listed in [Table 4](#). To illustrate, Cathy, recounted her shock at being sent an explicit amateur produced sexual-fetish image, on Tinder:

"...you get the odd person on Tinder who's into leather and dominatrix stuff, ...but I've not been offended. I've just seen men in leather, a man licking the sole of a shoe, actually. I probably found that more offensive than anything because he had his tongue on the sole of a shoe...she had stiletto's on, and he was licking the sole of the shoe, which I thought was gross, because of the hygiene issues. I'm not offended but someone licking the sole of shoe is quite distasteful"!

Undoubtedly, heterosexual online romance seekers expect a dinner date and conversation first, rather than seeing a sexual selfie, of the goods on offer, as evidenced in the figures for sexuality and SGI creation [Table 3](#). Also, [Table 17](#), displayed later in this chapter, evidenced homosexuals using SGI's on hooking-up sites, at nearly five times the rate of heterosexuals.

However, meeting up for dinner with an online dating site contact, does not always end well:

“...one guy he was just a bit of geek and he told me, he asked me, did I dye my hair, which I thought was a very insensitive question on a first date. I was not too worried about it, more worried about his lack of tact, and then he told me that he used mascara to dye his sideburns...to get rid of the grey” (Cathy).

The new ‘Porn Wars’: SGI’s vs commercial pornography

A comparison of how active SGI users in Stage 1 rated the quality of their experiences with both commercial and amateur online pornography, is germane to this investigation. [Table 14](#) laid-out how the 308 active SGI users rated both, with ten being the highest quality, and one the lowest.

Table 14 How SGI users rated amateur material, against commercially produced pornography (ten = highest: one = lowest)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)	Total
Commercial Internet Porn	7.2% 21	5.5% 16	7.9% 23	9.7% 28	11.7% 34	12.4% 36	17.2% 50	15.5% 45	6.6% 19	6.6% 19	290
Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn	3.3% 10	6.0% 18	6.0% 18	7.9% 24	13.6% 41	12.9% 39	17.9% 54	20.9% 63	7.0% 21	4.6% 14	302

The two rows in [Table 14](#), demonstrated that online commercial and SGI’s pornography’s quality, are approximately, evenly matched. Commercial online pornography has the edge in the highest quality category (ten) 6.6% Vs 4.6%, while curiously, also outscoring SGI’s too (7.2% Vs 3.3%), in the worst quality category (one). These findings indicate one of the main reasons why commercial pornography, in the form of adult-entertainment production and DVD sales/rentals, are wilting in the face of the almost equally regarded, SGI’s gratis arriviste. Why pay, when SGI’s and free-porn are almost as good, in terms of quality? In one sense, the child has overthrown

the father, just as in Greek mythology, where Zeus overthrew his patriarch, the Titan Kronos (Graves, 2013).

SGI's: Can't pay, won't pay...

Before carving online pornography's epitaph however, it still makes billions of dollars annually, as the literature review of this work exposed, though now mainly via adult TV channel subscriptions; advertising revenues on the PornTube sites; through adult PPV; and on the plethora of porn-channels available in 40% of US hotel rooms (ABC News, 2015). It is only the adult-film studios and DVD retailers/renters which are imploding. The future for these sectors of commercial online pornography looks bleak, after an examination of the findings from [Chart 28](#):

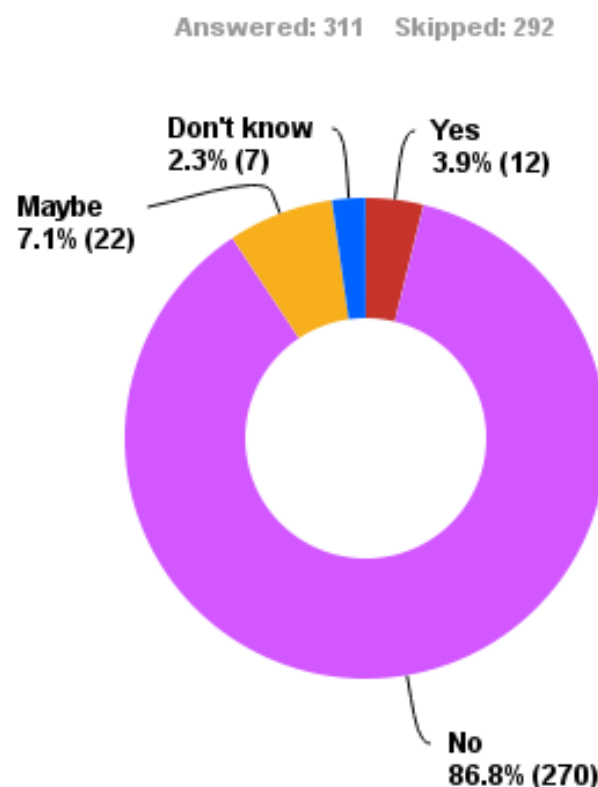


Chart 28 Are active SGI users prepared to pay for online pornography?

Active SGI users in Stage 1 revealed a huge resistance, 86.8% (270/311) to the prospect of paying for their online pornography. Such recalcitrance arguably augurs a similar crisis for the adult-entertainment industry, as with other media formats, such as books, music and films, in the face of online disruptive digital challengers. Some of

these somatic formats have recently endured often calamitous falls in profitability, as physical media sales nosedive, and illegal piracy and digital streaming decimates their sales volumes, and reduces the price which online customers are prepared to pay for the product (if anything at all). The free online pornography model, of which SGI's comprise a commodious element, joins other recent parvenus, like 'Uber' and 'Airbnb' etc., in the new Gig economy that is transforming capitalism's economy, in the era of Web 3.0 (Paul-Edwards, 2013; Lichfield, 2015). 'Schumpeter's gale' (2003), has never seemed a more apt analogy for this tumultuous process, in which SGI's find themselves in the vanguard. It is important to detach this appropriateness however, from the economist's other, misfiring gloomy prognostication, about the impending demise of capitalism, made in the 1940's.

SGI's: 'Plastic Porn' Vs Realcore

The findings in both Chart 28 and Table 14, add considerable weight to the accelerating importance of the Realcore movement in SGI's and online pornography. The PornTubes are evidence of the rising prevalence of amateur creations from ordinary people, and genuine couples, who have filmed their copulations, without artifice, in a Cromwellian 'warts and all' manner (Frasier, 2002). The 'plastic' pornography from commercial sources only scores broadly evenly for quality in [Table 14](#), alongside amateur SGI's, despite featuring: shaved, beautiful, boob-jobbed and youthful models, all glowing in the artificial lights of a studio, with their balletic and marathon coitus edited to perfection. Such is the much derided industrially manufactured smut, so vilified by Realcore theorist Messina (2010). This is a remarkable finding, given that commercial pornography is in contention against artisanal domestic productions consisting of a smorgasbord from: the middle-aged, non-toned, overweight, make-up devoid, hirsute, and unedited amateur enthusiasts, who copulate ardently in their own bedrooms, bathrooms and lounges. One cause of the rise of SGI's in online pornography is thus partially explained by these findings in

Table 14, which shows evidence of an approximate equilibrium in aesthetic appreciations, of both commercial and SGI's productions.

Contrarily, straight Dave did not concur with the idea that the SGI's he had seen in online pornography, met his visual requirements:

"...they were very amateurish, very unprofessional...When I've been researching I've seen men, sometimes have pictures of themselves naked, but women tend to be pretty fully clothed, the most you'll get is a woman maybe in her underwear, nothing really disgusting. Has a woman ever sent me an image of herself with no clothes on? Yes. Never numerous, once or twice. Actually, most don't, no, and actually the one time they have it hasn't done a lot for me. It put me off...I did get this image from this woman who called herself transsexual and I went on to WhatsApp...I showed her a picture of my face...so I said have you got any pictures...but they involved a lot of penises, and I didn't want to see her pictures of penises. I found it quite off-putting..."

Dave is firmly in the minority, per the Stage 1 survey, which demonstrated in Chart 23, that only 9/311 (2.9%), of active SGI users had overall negative experiences. The majority view, was expressed by Oliver, who recounted his reasons for enjoying SGI's more:

"I prefer the amateur stuff, if I'm honest. Just because with the commercial stuff you, sometimes you can tell they are just doing it for a job. Whereas the amateur stuff you can actually see that people are enjoying it, it's more realistic. When I say more realistic, I mean that it's not like, here this is a job go and do it and you know you can see the women and men are like just pretending to. I mean they probably are enjoying it, but they are pretending to enjoy it more than they probably, more than they actually are".

Oliver's account endorses the reasons why many online pornography users prefer this new type of material; eschewing contrivance, and embracing the stimulating realism that SGI's contain, intrinsically within their configuration. Perhaps these findings about SGI's, will go some way to undermine the oft-cited criticism of online pornography, that it is unrealistic? In summary, and furnishing an important finding

for this thesis, SGI's are: free, more-realistic, easily accessible to viewers and almost equally regarded by users as the rival commercial offering.

A second important finding worth emphasising here, is that, a good proportion of SGI images in circulation are still ones, taken as selfies, and employed in sexting; only a minority create and upload/send movie clips to PornTube sites, or online contacts, although these have far greater exposure and viewing numbers. [Chart 10](#) uncovered the PornTube sites, as the paramount platform for seeing SGI's, with sexual selfies close behind. However, none of the five Stage 3 interviewees, had ever uploaded a movie clip onto a Tube site, but all had seen still SGI's, and four of them had created them too, although only the gay men, frequently.

How SGI's are being used

The question of how, precisely, online SGI users utilize the material they view, download and create was a key area of inquiry for this study to undertake. Table 15 displayed how between 268-298, SGI users in Stage 1, variously employed their images:

Table 15 How active SGI users employ their online materials

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Sexual stimulation	86.1% 255	13.9% 41	296
Masturbation	91.9% 274	8.1% 24	298
With your sexual partner/s	37.0% 104	63.0% 177	281
For collecting purposes	8.1% 22	91.9% 250	272
For Research reasons	14.2% 38	85.8% 230	268
To satisfy curiosity	65.3% 190	34.7% 101	291
For educational reasons	24.5% 67	75.5% 206	273
As a social pastime with friends	10.4% 28	89.6% 242	270
For humorous reasons	28.2% 77	71.8% 196	273
To make friends and / or meet people with similar interests	13.3% 36	86.7% 235	271
Dating	11.3% 31	88.7% 243	274
Hooking-up for sex	21.7% 60	78.3% 217	277

The number of respondents in Table 15 fluctuated, as SGI users could answer 'yes' or 'no' to multiple SGI activities, reflecting the ample array of differing habitudes, or they could skip each option entirely. At the apex, 91.9% (274/298) of SGI users stated that they employed it for masturbation purposes, closely followed by those enjoying it for sexual stimulation, at 86.1 % (255/296).

Online pornography/SGI's: A normal part of growing-up?

These findings illuminate a real transformation in pornography use, away from the eponymous 'lonely wanker', who frequented seedy sex shops and adult cinemas in the 1970's, garbed in a 'dirty mac'. Now it has metamorphosed into a major, and normalised, online recreational pastime, enjoyed mainly at home, for nearly two-thirds (63.4% - 377/599) of the sample, per [Chart 12](#). Furthermore, such use had become entangled with SGI's, with [Chart 20](#) having shown that 85.4% (322/377) of online pornography users, had seen some amateur material in the last half year. These findings concur with the ideas of Wilson (1980), who distinguished 'self-fulfilment', as one of the four types of non-work recreation. With leisure, in terms of time and money devoted to it, escalating in importance in the post-industrial, service-based economies of the West, the pursuit of pleasure has become increasing eminent. To fill increased leisure time, online pornography/SGI's have proliferated, alongside foreign holidays, sport, TV, movies, and socialising in bars, etc.

Table 15's findings, in conclusion, could signify that enjoying masturbation and sexual stimulation with online pornography/SGI's, has become one of our society's premier non-work leisure pastimes. The survey sample's participation rate for online pornography, at 63.4%, in [Chart 12](#), compares favourably with UK adults' other main leisure pastimes: TV watching at 87.6%, spending time with friends and family at 83.5%, or listening to music on 73.7% (ons, 2013). Feed into this equation the fact that only 2.9% (9/311), of this sample of online SGI users, felt negative about their experiences in viewing/creating their material, per [Chart 23](#), then we can acknowledge the status of online pornography as a mass leisure pastime; predominantly pursued, safely and enjoyably, by large numbers of adults. Coupled with this, SGI's had been seen or used by 84.1% (322/377) of the online pornography users in the last six months, and so form a significant part of this phenomena, per [Chart 20](#), to attain Wilson's (1980), non-work self-fulfilment leisure goals.

Harry reinforced this interpretation, believing that the social lives of gay men have been improved because of the use of SGI's in hooking-up apps:

"I also hear now saying, that they do enjoy more going out now, because if they go out clubbing or partying they will not be under pressure, or hooking up with someone, because they know they can do that online. They will have a better time enjoying that time with their friends without that pressure of finding someone to have sex with, because they can do it easily in another realm".

The homogeneity, of the adult use of online pornography/SGI's, received some qualified support from Officer 4 too, after expressing caveats about the dangers to children:

"...if two people want to use a social media app to go and meet and have sex in an alleyway, beyond the usual dangers of potentially unprotected sex, I'd say, there's nothing bad about that...if you've got two consenting adults doing anything, I don't see any issue with that at all..."

With 37% (104/288), of SGI users in Table 15, recording that they used their online pornography with their sexual partners, the 'lonely wanker' trope about users', is further eroded. More than a third of SGI users in Stage 1, were using such images to spice-up their sex lives with their current partner, perhaps trying something new, risqué or a trifle kinky, such as consensual mild-BDSM etc. Their goal was rejuvenating sex lives that may have become jaded, or had lost their sparkle. SGI's in online pornography, per Table 15, were being used with their partners in 37% of cases, possibly resuscitating couples' moribund sex lives, that had suffered from too much 'vanilla' (plain) sex, or its routinisation, as a quick chore executed once a week on the same day and time. Kingsley Davis (1937), argued that prostitution may be saving marriages, otherwise at risk of breaking up, by providing a safe sexual release mechanism for frustrated husbands; now it could be online pornography/SGI's, which are fulfilling this socially useful role. Also, those in empty-shell marriages could now use online pornography to seek sexual satisfaction, while maintaining their marriage, although the issue of virtual infidelity (Gunther, 2013), complicates this analysis.

SGI's on Tinder, Grindr & the other hooking-up/dating apps

With 21.7% (60/277) of Stage 1 SGI users, affirming that they used the images for swapping pictures with potential partners on hooking-up apps like Grindr, these findings in Table 15, could endorse the opinions of Sales (2015), discussed in the literature review. He prognosticated upon their role in an alleged decline of normal dating, in favour of NSA, brief sexual encounters. This finding supplies important information on this matter, but it is gay/bi men who predominantly use hooking-up apps, not heterosexuals. SGI use on hooking-up sites was at 21.7% (60/277), more than double that of the dating website users, at 11.3% (31/274), per Table 15. For gay/bi men, Sales' proposition that the 'quick fuck', had triumphed over more traditional sexual partner acquiring techniques, due to hooking-up apps, has some credibility. However, the research findings in this thesis totally reject Sales' ideas on the Dating Apocalypse for heterosexuals; it's more Grindrageddon, than Tindergeddon.

Jack recounted how pervasive, exchanging SGI's are, in the gay hooking-up for sex app world:

"I would say that the exchange of graphic material is really important...If you were not to receive this material from a gay man, you would assume that there is something wrong with that person...just a vibe, you wouldn't want to establish some sort of relationship with this person, you wouldn't want to have that, who is not comfortable with their body or just trusting the other person with something as minimal as sending a faceless pic of their body".

Jack evoked a picture of gay men's SGI use for sexual hook-ups, where one aspect of main-stream culture (sexual mores), had been totally reversed and celebrated; an analogue to the way 'Mod' youth culture in the early 1960's, had done the same for Ska music, prescription amphetamines ('Purple Hearts'²⁵ etc.) and stylish Italian suits and footwear (Cohen, 2011). Among gay/bi men, the sending/receiving of SGI's to arrange the proverbial 'quick fuck' has become the new norm, and refusing to do so

²⁵ Drinamyl amphetamine

is what makes you weird. Strain Theory (Merton, 1938), could also account for this finding, as gay SGI users on Grindr etc., have adopted alternative methods (innovated), to attain their goals, of instant NSA sexual gratification.

How SGI's are used by different genders

If the purposes of SGI use are cross tabbed with gender, then the following extremely interesting results are revealed in [Table 16](#):

Table 16 Crosstab of gender and how SGI users employ their materials

To satisfy curiosity			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	60.9% 106	39.1% 68	58.4% 174
Q3: Female (B)	72.9% 78	27.1% 29	35.9% 107

For educational reasons			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	23.6% 39	76.4% 126	55.4% 165
Q3: Female (B)	24.5% 24	75.5% 74	32.9% 98

Sexual stimulation			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	86.0% 153	14.0% 25	59.7% 178
Q3: Female (B)	87.0% 94	13.0% 14	36.2% 108

Masturbation			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	96.2% 176	3.8% 7	61.4% 183
Q3: Female (B)	84.8% 89	15.2% 16	35.2% 105

With your sexual partner/s			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	34.9% 59	65.1% 110	56.7% 169
Q3: Female (B)	39.2% 40	60.8% 62	34.2% 102

For collecting purposes			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	10.9% 18	89.1% 147	55.4% 165
Q3: Female (B)	3.1% 3	96.9% 94	32.6% 97

For Research reasons			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	12.2% 20	87.8% 144	55.0% 164
Q3: Female (B)	16.0% 15	84.0% 79	31.5% 94

As a social pastime with friends			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	8.0% 13	92.0% 150	54.7% 163
Q3: Female (B)	14.4% 14	85.6% 83	32.6% 97

For humorous reasons			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	26.1% 43	73.9% 122	55.4% 165
Q3: Female (B)	33.7% 33	66.3% 65	32.9% 98

To make friends and / or meet people with similar interests			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	15.2% 25	84.8% 139	55.0% 164
Q3: Female (B)	7.2% 7	92.8% 90	32.6% 97

Dating			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	15.0% 25	85.0% 142	56.0% 167
Q3: Female (B)	4.1% 4	95.9% 93	32.6% 97

Hooking-up for sex			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q3: Male (A)	32.4% 55	67.6% 115	57.0% 170
Q3: Female (B)	4.1% 4	95.9% 93	32.6% 97

Female SGI users in Table 16, were 12% more likely to use their online materials, for curiosity reasons than males, and 0.9% more for educational purposes too. Pearson Chi Squares for gender and education/curiosity are statistically significant occurrences, at $p=.000$. In terms of using SGI's for educational purposes, the findings suggest approximate equilibrium between the genders, males on 23.6% and females on 24.5%.

The gender differences in terms of SGI usage between males and females for sexual stimulation are minimal too, only 1%, 87% for females and 86% for males. Although males used the images more than females for masturbation (96.2% Vs 84.5%). Males were more than three times as likely than females to use SGI's for collecting purposes, 10.9% Vs 3.1%; these findings perhaps indicating that the same OCD driven nerdy males, who perhaps collect Star Wars plastic figures or go trainspotting, also extended their obsessions to amassing a catalogue of online SGI's too.

Contrasting SGI gender differences in Table 16, in the online dating, and the hooking-up for sex categories, proved informative. Males used SGI's at 32.4% (55/177) on the hooking-up apps, while negotiating with their potential online casual sexual partners, while females did so only at 4.1% (4/97), an eight-to-one ratio. Contrarily, females used SGI's on dating sites (like eHarmony etc.) at 4.1% or (4/97), while males did so at the rate of 15% (25/167), a ratio of just under four-to-one, for male/female usage. This still represents a large divergence in gender usage, but nowhere near as great as on the hooking-up apps.

Cathy elaborated upon her experiences with SGI's, on dating websites/apps (including Tinder):

"I've not met any women, who have used sites other than regular dating sites, that use still images. I've no experience of Self-Generated movies...you might be talking to the wrong generation as well; I get the impression that people in the twenties, will be using Snapchat and other sites that generate video..."

Three possible conjectures could be responsible for the massive disparity, for gender and hooking-up/sexting findings, in [Table 16](#). Firstly, the large preponderance of gay and bisexual men in the survey sample, and their more copious online pornography/SGI use in all areas; secondly, the trite shibboleth that men have higher libidos than women, and consequently are more strenuous and instrumental, in their use of SGI's to acquire a 'quick fuck'. Finally, that women are inculcated into being more monogamous, and romantic, by western culture and values, as part of their housewife/mother/caring socialisation process. Consequently, online SGI usage for many women, has become permeated with powerful social stigmas, inhibiting female participation in this activity, relative to men. There is considerable evidence that gender socialisation is still a potent force in the UK. Women workers were 44% part-time (PT), as compared to only 12% for men; while women do housework for thirteen hours a week, compared to eight for men; and, spend twenty-three hours a week caring for family members, in contrast to men's ten (ons, 2013; bsa, 2013). All this is irrefutable evidence of women's continued preponderance within the traditional housewife/mother/carer roles in the UK, which could have strongly influenced their attitudes towards online pornography/SGI's. Although the anti-porn feminists' (Dworkin, 1989; MacKinnon, 1989) analysis of pornography is fragile, the goal of other second wave feminists like Friedan (1963), in promoting greater overall gender equality, still seems far away.

There are many more SGI uses with gender parity, per [Table 16](#); it is only in the collecting, hooking-up, and dating categories where wide gender disparities have surfaced.

How SGI's are used by different sexualities

Table 17, is a crosstab between different sexualities' use of SGI's for both dating and hooking-up purposes:

Table 17 Crosstab of sexuality and how SGI users employ their materials

Dating			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q4: Heterosexual (Straight) (A)	3.6% 3	96.4% 81	30.1% 84
Q4: Homosexual (Gay or Lesbian) (B)	16.9% 20	83.1% 98	42.3% 118
Q4: Bisexual (C)	10.6% 5	89.4% 42	16.8% 47
Hooking-up for sex			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Q4: Heterosexual (Straight) (A)	7.0% 6	93.0% 80	30.8% 86
Q4: Homosexual (Gay or Lesbian) (B)	34.5% 41	65.5% 78	42.7% 119
Q4: Bisexual (C)	19.1% 9	80.9% 38	16.8% 47

The findings in Table 17 are startling, homosexual SGI users, employed their images for hooking-up for sex at 34.5% (41/119) of cases, as compared to a lesser 19.1% (9/47) for bisexuals, and a mere 7% (6/86) for heterosexuals. For dating purposes, SGI's were used by: heterosexuals 3.6% (3/84), bisexuals 10.6% (5/47), and homosexuals at 16.9% (20/118). Gay SGI users in Stage 1, were around nine times more likely to use their images for arranging casual sex on hooking-up apps, than their heterosexual peers. Fascinatingly, gays (16.9%-20/118) were also four times more likely to use SGI's for dating purposes, compared to heterosexuals (3.6%-3/84). The mutual influences of sexuality and SGI use for dating/hooking-up for sex, are statistically significant ($p=0.000$).

A key finding of this research is that gay men, clustered in large UK metropolitan cities, were vigorously using SGI's on online hooking-up apps, to arrange instant sexual encounters. As Jack explained:

“(Dudesnude) That platform...is just based on the assumption that everyone who goes into that place is not going to be having any trouble sharing that material, and that everyone will have some sort of naked picture of themselves on there. It's actually making it like a prerequisite to participate to have this material...”

On 'dudesnude.com' (2016), a US based, gay/bisexual SNS/hooking-up website, with 500,000 members, naked SGI's are now *de rigueur*.

Table 17 also revealed that some gays are looking for romantic, long-term, monogamous partnership/marriage via dating websites. But even on that platform, gay and bisexual men have massively elevated levels of SGI use (16.9%-20/118), in their romantic questing for a 'long term companion', compared to straights (3.6%-3/84). Nonetheless, seeking love and romance for gay dating site users, still seemed to frequently entail a fulsome and explicit view of the goods on offer, via SGI swapping, before any date with a putative future long-time partner can occur.

SGI's & humour

To temper the sober academic debates that surround SGI's, a further key point was discovered, that a significant majority of both genders are using them for humorous purposes. Table 16 revealed that 26.1% (43/165) of men, and 33.7% (33/98) of women active SGI users, do so for jocular purposes. Social policy makers, law enforcement agencies and criminologists often focus their attentions on the negative impacts that online pornography/SGI's may be having on society and individuals, particularly adolescents. Meanwhile, many actual users of SGI's are enjoying themselves, by laughing at the sheer risibility of much of what they have seen online, often socially with their friends. The inadvertent, ludicrous nature of some SGI/online pornographic images, while giving pleasure and joy to many viewers, per Table 16, also provide mirth to some; women laughed at the SGI's they saw, 7.6% more than men, perhaps

suggesting they have a more acute awareness of the discrepancy between the genuinely sexually stimulating and the farcical.

Deriving hilarity from the frequent absurdity of online SGI's, is a feature for nearly a third of SGI users in Stage 1 (28.2%-77/273 from [Table 15](#)), a figure which dwarfs that of those who had a negative experience with their SGI use, as revealed in [Chart 23](#), when only 9/311 (2.9%), of active users recorded that their experiences with such images were negative. Those laughing at online SGI's, outnumber those crying, by a massive proportion of thirteen-to-one. Or alliteratively, mirth far overpowers misery, among adult SGI users, from these findings. Such a conclusion furnishes an important counterweight to the doomsayers on the impacts of SGI's; those jeremiads, who keep prophesying the impending arrival of the porno-apocalypse, or rather, pornogeddon. The findings add weight to various theoretical analyses posed by this research: firstly, from a Marxist perspective, the subsuming of humour and laughter, into the means by which capitalism expropriates everything into itself, seems relevant (Caffentzis, 2005); as do the ideas of the cultural studies theorists (Paasonen, et al., 2007; McNair, 2002), who speculated about how pornography has saturated mainstream culture, as in the 'Teen' porno-comedy 'American Pie' (1999) and its four sequels, where an adolescent boy is caught by his father with his erect penis stuck in his mom's home-baked pie. Also, Wilson's (1980) ideas about leisure, whereby the many pleasures of online pornography/SGI's (including humour), have become part of many people's non-work, recreational activities. The 'lonely wanker' trope again seems undermined by such findings on humour and SGI's.

However, as a caveat to this point, it is certainly the case that when many children have accessed legal online pornography, certainly for the first time, the negative responses of shock, feeling sick and disgust, often dominate their reactions; and certainly, not laughter, although all these negative reactions decline rapidly, inversely to their growing up (Martellozzo, et al., 2016).

SGI's & gay men: Liberation or damnation?

All three of the fieldwork stages for this thesis confirm that LBGT engagement with all aspects of online pornography/SGI's (i.e. age of first viewing, creation and distribution, viewing and use in hooking-up apps, etc.), is much more pronounced than their heterosexual counterparts. Thus, Chart 9 revealed that 85% of gay respondents in Stage 1, had used online pornography in the last six months, compared to 78.7% of bisexuals, and 46.7% of heterosexuals. For active SGI users, 34.4% of homosexuals had created and shared an online SGI in the last six months, compared to 31.4% for bisexuals, and a lowly 12.3% for heterosexuals, per Table 3.

Jack, confirmed these findings when he described the use of SGI's on gay hooking-up apps:

"I would say that it's a norm, it's usually a conversation, often starts with have you got any pics...maybe you ask to give them or you asked to receive them, maybe your second or third message...I would say it's very common, the norm..."

Stages 1 and 3 of the fieldwork provided a great deal of compelling confirmatory evidence to confirm the use of SGI's, by gay men, on hooking-up apps; Table 19 showed that 21.7% (60/227), of all online pornography users used SGI's to hook-up for sex, while Table 4 divulged that 31.8% (97/305), of active SGI users has seen such images on hooking-up apps. The online LBGT community view SGI's earlier than their straight counterparts, as can be seen in Table 10, where 54.3% of gay respondents had first seen SGI's before the age of sixteen, in contrast to 28.7% of straights. Finally, LBGT's were far more likely to have made a SGI, as per Table 3. Finally, seeing sexualized selfies (56.2%), was the second highest category of SGI engagement in Chart 10.

Jack expounded upon why SGI's are so pervasive among gay hooking-up app users:

"You would do it with yourself naked, then you would use this material to hook up, to ease the social interaction, it's a social lubricant when it comes to hooking-up..."

All these findings point to a vibrant, and almost catholic, use of SGI's to enhance LGBT peoples sex and social lives. Campaigners for Gay Liberation would undoubtedly welcome this development, as a former oppressed minority have not solely kicked down the repressive 'closet' door, by use of SGI's for casual sex, but instead, they have put a proverbial bomb under the constrictions imposed by the heteronormative sexual conventions of western society. Such an exuberant embracing of SGI's in online pornography, for the attainment of sexual freedom, puts them firmly in antinomy against the ideas of the MacKinnon/Dworkin (1989; 1989) anti-porn feminist school. The prodigious LGBT use of online pornography/SGI's, have come concurrently with a whole raft of other important LGBT equality measures: gay marriage and civil partnerships, gay adoption, anti-discrimination laws and anti-hate crime measures, etc., many enshrined in the Equality Act of 2010 (Featherstone, 2016). Online pornography and SGI's take their place among this array of freedoms, secured by this minority, when appraised through the perspective of being a NSM, based on identity, and social/cultural affinities (Pichardo, 1997).

Grindr, the leading gay hooking-up app in the UK, launched three years before Tinder, its heterosexual analogue, and this study's findings expose radically different ways the two are used. Most heterosexuals equate Tinder, and dating websites; both are predominantly used by that group for dating and long term relationship seeking, and not the instant sexual gratification of the gay hooking-up apps.

The verdict of this investigation then, are the existence of two distinct realities for SGI use; for heterosexuals on the one hand, and the LGBT community on the other. For the former: hedonism, sexual freedom, pleasure, leisure, identity and greater political, legal and social rights have been attained, all splayed out in a rich skein of manifold advances. Conversely, for the heterosexual majority, online SGI use remains yet, far more retarded both in its extent and the uses on which it is expended. A major bifurcation in SGI use, between gay/bisexual users and heterosexual ones, has been uncovered.

Yet, despite all the LGBT communities' advances and gains in terms of legal equality and social and economic improvements, a dark shadow has been unearthed by these research findings, cast by gay and bisexual men's use of SGI's for attaining casual sex on the hooking-up apps. This penumbral shadow threatens to eclipse the many gains just cited. These many hazardous, and potentially lethal dangers, to gay and bisexual men's health, that their SGI use on hooking-up apps has entailed, are like the Hydra, endowed with several heads. Disturbingly, the menaces are concealed, all hidden within those very same liberating sexual freedoms, furnished by online pornography/SGI's. The jeopardies emanating from gay men's elevated use of SGI's, are a significant finding of this thesis, and include:

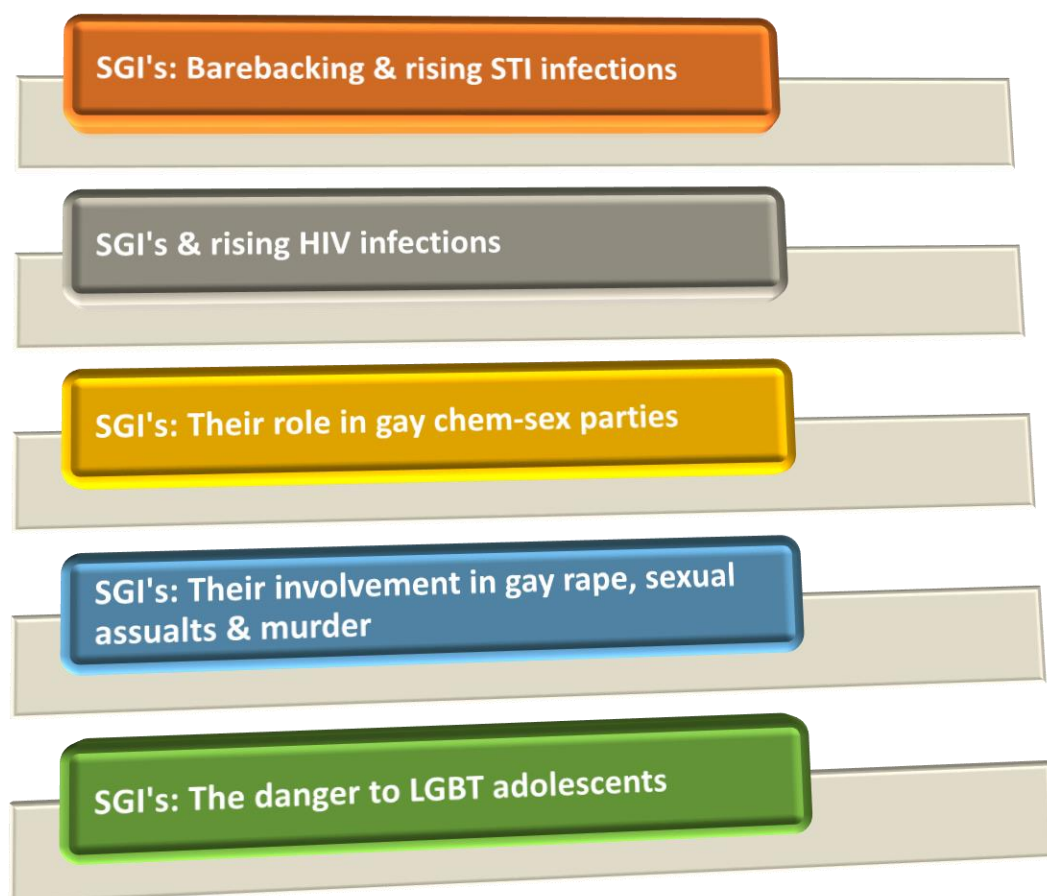


Figure 34 The main dangers to LGBT users, of SGI's

SGI's: Barebacking & rising STI infections

In the US, there has been a recent dramatic rise in the number of STI infections, particularly syphilis, gonorrhoea and Hepatitis C.; Rhode Island Health reported a 79% rise in syphilis, and a 30% increase in gonorrhoea between 2013-14 (ri.gov, 2015). In the UK, the latest figures for London, show a 163% increase in syphilis infections between 2010-2015, and 90% of the new infections were among gay men in 2015 (Public Health England, 2016).

Jack gave an exposition about the emergence of the 'Bare Back Real Time' (BBRT) app, in the US:

"There's another platform...BBRT, where the people who are going into that platform, it's just assumed that it would be people who will engage only in condomless sex, and just by definition of that group, you will find people who are sharing this kind of material, everyone does. It would be weird to find people wearing clothes, it would be the exact opposite of Tinder where everyone wears clothes".

Gay/bisexual men's vigorous implementation of SGI's, to facilitate sexual hook-ups, increasingly bareback, constitutes one major element of a significant public health danger, exposed by this research.

SGI's role in increased HIV infections

The introduction of effective antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to slow HIV's progress, in the 1990's, and the passage of time since the 1980's epidemic, have contributed to a diminution of the awareness of the virus, and the apprehension of catching it, in many people's minds (nber, nd). Complacency about HIV infection is more widespread, particularly among younger gay men; evidenced by the shocking estimate that one-seventeenth of gay men in the UK are now HIV+, and the fact that half of all new infections are among gay men (NAT.org.uk, 2015). SGI's role in oiling casual sex encounters on hooking-up apps has been already been highlighted, but Harry's words exemplify it:

"I wouldn't say I use SGI's to satisfy my desires. I would say I use them to know what I'm going into, so I like to know who I'm meeting and what it all looks like, to prevent any disappointment...when you meet someone you can see the size and the curves and what not, but online you need detailed descriptions you know, because we are busy professionals, and we don't have time to be disappointed".

The role of the drug PrEP (Truvada), is worth raising here. It is a highly effective prophylactic to new HIV transmissions in 90% of instances: these were currently at 6,095 new cases a year in the UK in 2015, up from 2,838 in 1998, 56.1% of them being gay men (Harker, 2010; NAT, 2016). However, the drug has not been routinely available on the NHS, over a funding row about whether local government, or the NHS should pay for it; although it is widely available in the US. This may change following a very recent decision in the UK's High Court (Fishwick, 2016). With HIV infections, already high among gay men, would the availability of a largely effective barrier to its transmission on the NHS, encourage more bareback casual sex among gay users of SGI's, on hooking-up apps? Truvada, might very well lower HIV infection rates²⁶, but, like the contraceptive pill, it has no impact on preventing other STI infections.

SGI's, by helping to facilitate repeated, casual, condomless sex among gay men, may be fuelling a public health disaster, in which one-eighth of gay men in London, are currently estimated to be HIV+ (NAT.org.uk, 2015). For an austerity hit country, each new HIV infection, means the NHS and taxpayer must fund the costs of expensive, lifetime, antiretroviral drug and health treatments; this was estimated by the US's Centre for Disease Control (CDC), to be \$379,000 per HIV+ person (Wenger, 2014). Weigh this lifetime financial liability, against a year's supply of Truvada, estimated at \$6,277 per individual. The public health situation, with rising HIV cases, has become so serious, that the NHS watchdog for medicines and prescriptions (NICE), has just

²⁶ In newly emerging evidence from four London sexual health clinics with heavy gay male clientele, new HIV cases fell by 40% in 2016, compared to 2015. This has been anecdotally linked to the increased illegal purchasing of Truvada from online pharmacies based in India etc. (Wilson, 2017).

released new draft guidelines for the increased distribution of free condoms to gay men and young people, via the C-Card Scheme administered by Local Authorities (nice.org.uk, 2016).

A further point about the role of SGI's on gay hooking-up apps also needs to be addressed. The apps stand accused of contributing to gay men's increased HIV infections and STI's due to their promotion of 'serosorting'. This is the process where gay men seek casual-sex with other men, of the same HIV status as themselves. So, on the gay hooking-up app 'Hornet', each man's profile picture has a box where they can put their current HIV status, and the exact date when they were last tested. Critics, say that gays who are HIV negative, can therefore seek out others who are the same, using SGI's on the apps, and therefore the need for condoms during anal sex can be safely dispensed with. Unfortunately, HIV infections rise as some are unaware of their true status, some lie and some have contracted the infection since their previous test. Also, other STI's, like syphilis etc., are not blocked anymore. SGI's and hooking-up apps, may be leading to a dramatic rise in serosorting among gay casual-sex seekers, and a potential HIV public health disaster (Healthline, 2013). Interestingly, serosorting can also work with two men who both know they are HIV+ and so believe that they do not need to use prophylactics, as they already have the antibodies; such a decision promotes the spread of other STI's, when taken with NSA sex with strangers on hooking-up apps after the exchange of SGI's.

SGI's & gay chem-sex parties

A recent UK survey, of men who attended gay chem-sex parties, found that one-third were HIV+ (Halliday & Godfrey, 2015). These drug-fuelled orgies can often last for two or three days. Invitations to them are usually sent and received, as part of the SGI exchanging process on hooking-up apps, to known acquaintances. Attendees usually get high on a cocktail of recreational drugs: Viagra, Mephedrone, Poppers²⁷, GHB,

²⁷ Amyl Nitrate

MDMA²⁸ (Ecstasy), or Crystal Meth²⁹. The health danger supposition is that, while high, participants may be more disposed to indulge in, more reckless, bareback, anal sex. However, both gay male interviewees in Stage 3, strongly rejected this conjecture, as Harry explained:

“...the hook-up sites... it didn’t create the issue, if there were no hook-up sites the issues would still be there, people would still go to saunas or clubs or dark-rooms. It’s just a different way of how things are done, you know...I certainly do believe that people do behave more recklessly in terms of alcohol and drugs, but what I am saying is that hook-up sites do provide a platform where people meet of these interests...but I think that if you didn’t have these hook up sites, people would find a way to do this. Previously it was done in a pub, sauna, dark-room. Yes, there is a great danger, but I wouldn’t say that it was the cause of the problem...it would have happened back in the day, now it’s more private in the home. I am not saying it doesn’t encourage the problem, because of how easy it is, but I am saying is, that it doesn’t cause the problem”.

SGI’s: Rape, Sexual Assaults, Poisoning & Murder...

In November 2016, Stephen Port, aged forty-one, was found guilty of the murder of four young gay men, and sentenced to a whole-life prison term (Davies, 2016). He murdered them after he had lured them to his flat in Barking, East London, then poisoned them with GHB, a Class C controlled substance, before having sex with them as they lay unconscious and dying. He used gay hooking-up apps, including ‘Grindr, Gaydar, FitLads’ etc., to arrange these lethal sexual rendezvous’ (Elgot, et al., 2016). Another seven victims who survived his attacks, also came forward after he was charged, and Port was convicted of thirteen further counts of rape, administering a noxious substance and sexual assault, in addition to the four murder convictions (BBCNews, 2016; Davies, 2016). GHB (a.k.a. ‘Liquid Ecstasy’), is predominantly used

²⁸ Methylenedioxymethamphetamine

²⁹ N-methyl-1-phenylpropan-2-amine

by gay men, in moderate amounts during sex, to improve pleasure, but too much can cause drowsiness and death, especially if mixed with alcohol. It is also one of the three main noxious substances used in 'Date Rapes', along with Rohypnol³⁰ ('Roofies') and Ketamine³¹ ('Special K') (Cunha, 2016). Port's trial is the first case of a UK gay serial killer, whose modus operandi entailed using SGI's on hooking-up apps, to entice young male victims to his lair, under the pretext of casual sex, only then to poison them to the point of stupefaction, sexually assault, rape and finally murder some of them. Coincidentally, a second separate trial, that ran almost concurrently at the Old Bailey, had Stefano Brizzi, aged fifty, convicted of the murder of PC Gordon Semple, who he met after sexting SGI's on Grindr. Brizzi was high on Crystal Meth when he murdered Semple in a BDSM sex-session. Investigators found partially eaten pieces of the corpse in his flat, and the victim's DNA on cooking gear and eating utensils; parts of the corpse were semi-dissolved in acid, in the bath (Siddique, 2016; Topping, 2016).

The NCA has reported that in 2009, there were thirty-three reported rapes after meeting someone on a hooking-up app or dating website, this had increased to 184 in 2014 (Davies & Laville, 2016). Only after Port was charged with the four murders, did seven other living victims come forward to make their allegations, suggesting a massive non-reporting problem for issues like drugging, and sexual assaults/Date Rapes. What we do know is that, in England and Wales, approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men were raped in 2013, and 500,000 sexual assaults were carried out. An overwhelming 90% of those raped, knew the perpetrator beforehand, suggesting a high incidence of Date Rape (rapecrisis, 2016). SGI's, used on hooking-up apps, and the links to Date Rape drug use, in sexual assaults on gay men, is an area desperately

³⁰ Flunitrazepam

³¹ Ketamine hydrochloride

calling out for further research. The statistics show a rapidly escalating problem, and they also undoubtedly reflect massive under-reporting of the issue.

The dangers of SGI's for LGBT adolescents

Statistics abound from Stage 1 proving that LGBT children see online SGI's far more frequently, and at an earlier age, than their straight counterparts, see: [Table 10](#), and [Chart 16](#). LGBT respondents in Stage 1 generated their own SGI's far more numerous too, per [Table 3](#). Children, by taking a sexualized selfie, and sending it online to another person, are technically committing a criminal act, involving an IIoC (of themselves). Harry acknowledged the dangers of SGI's for LGBT children:

"I think it's a way to exploit people, it is a way to take advantage of people and potentially blackmail them. For people with something to lose, Self-Generated pornography, you might be exposed to the wider public, it may be very traumatic or embarrassing".

Although Jack was less concerned:

"I don't think they pose any sort of new threat. Pornography has been around there for quite a long time, I don't think this changes it significantly...kids who are under age, they've always had resources to pornography through magazines, or any other types of things...they would have found the means to get it. Maybe now its slightly easier".

All five SOECA officers, highlighted the fact that most children were unlikely to be prosecuted for sending and receiving SGI/IIoC's of themselves, usually to their own girlfriends and boyfriends, a pertinent point, given LGBT children's higher use of SGI's. Officer 4 summed-up the current situation:

"...when you've got two fourteen-year-olds, or two fifteen-year-olds, who are of a similar age and similar experience...to look at charging someone of that age in a criminal court would be a rarity, it may happen it might be on a case by case basis...we've always got to try and work around the law and interpret them as best we can...there has to be a little bit of common sense within the police, the CPS and the families themselves".

The need for better education, on the issues surrounding online pornography/SGI's, and more effective public health campaigns about online safety, health, digital security and privacy, was a recurrent theme expressed by all ten interviewees in the fieldwork. However, Harry expressed dissatisfaction with the illogicality of the age of consent for sex in the UK being sixteen, two years less than the legal age for being photographed in sexual images, at eighteen:

"If a sixteen-year-old adolescent can give consent to have sex with someone else, then why shouldn't they be allowed to go on hook-up sites? It is again two consenting adults over the age of sixteen giving consent to exchange images, but it is easier to exploit at that age, I think it should be over sixteen..."

The divergence in the age of consent in the UK and the legal age for sexual images could potentially lead many sixteen and seventeen-year-old children into criminality when sending SGI's on the gay hooking-up apps. This is because these apps (Grindr, Hornet, Gaydar, etc.) have weak verification procedures, and only ask you to tick a box confirming you are aged eighteen or over, without any proof. This is a truism for most online pornography sites too, and is one of the main reasons why the legal strengthening of their age verification measures has become a much-advocated legal reform among child protection charities, and is being incorporated into the Digital Economy Bill, currently being considered in the UK parliament. This measure plans to give the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) the power to ban pornography sites that do not implement a suitably robust system to verify age, say by requiring a CC to be used (Temperton, 2016).

Conclusions

This chapter has established that SGI consumption can be divided into two. Firstly, with still SGI's, just under 30% of users are seeing the images on SNS's and messaging/image sharing apps, revealing the extent to which they have populated these platforms, even though they were not strictly created for that purpose. For gay and bisexual men, seeing SGI's on hooking-up apps was very prevalent. The second type was video, or movie-clips on the PornTube websites, which had been accessed to view SGI's in nearly 90% of cases. Also, around one-third had seen them via webcam-sex.

SGI's were approximately equally regarded by the respondents, in terms of aesthetic appreciation of quality, which has had profound consequences for sections of the commercial adult-entertainment industry. Around nine-in-ten of Stage 1 respondents used SGI for masturbation/sexual stimulation, although about six-in-ten also wanted to satisfy curiosity. Gay and bisexual men were far more likely to use still SGI's on the hooking-up apps, in pursuit of casual sexual encounters, than heterosexuals; around a third of gay SGI and bisexual users did this, nearly three times the rate for heterosexuals. This furnished them with greater sexual freedoms, but also more acute dangers from: STI's, HIV and possible sexual assaults.

The great majority of SGI users are passive consumers of the images, whether moving, or still. Only a minority have created some of their own, and this was predominantly gay and bisexual males through their hooking-up app activities.

In the next chapter, the extent, nature and implications of the criminal abuse of SGI's, and the role of PSHE/SRE in schools in potentially ameliorating these dangers is scrutinized. Furthermore, the potentialities for SGI's in the promotion of greater sexual literacy among adolescents and adults are examined.

Chapter 8

The criminal abuse of SGI's & its prevention

Introduction

The aims of this chapter are two-fold. Firstly, it will examine the extent and nature of online criminal abuse of SGI's. Whereas the last chapter brought out the dangers to one specific group in society - gay and bisexual men - the criminal aspect of SGI abuse will now be significantly expanded to encompass children and vulnerable adults.

The second aim is to establish what the role of formal school education is, and, more importantly, what it should be in relation to teaching adolescents about the many issues surrounding sex, relationships, online pornography and SGI's; additionally, digital privacy, and internet health, safety and security. Widening the scope of this aim, the controversial topic of whether children and adults can, in terms of pedagogy, garner useful knowledge and skills about sex and relationships, from viewing SGI's/online pornography, will be addressed. Thus, in Table 15, it was revealed that just short of a quarter of SGI users in Stage 1, employed their images for educational reasons.

The dark side of SGI's

Chart 23 showed relatively few (2.9%-9/311), of the survey's SGI users having negative experiences with their materials; uncovering more about the darker and more criminal elements surrounding their recent proliferation necessitated a switch in emphasis to the Stage 2 interviews, with the SOECA officers. The experiential lacunae in the criminal abuse of SGI's, was also present among the interviewees in Stage 3. Most reported, at worst, vague feelings of uneasiness about certain contacts encountered

online while exchanging SGI's. To illustrate, Oliver spoke of one middle-aged woman, a fellow football coach, who kept sending him unasked for SGI's of herself:

"I don't find her weird or anything, I just find it, to me, it just comes across a bit desperate to me. I prefer the chase and if someone offers it out willy nilly I just find...once I know I can get someone, I'm not interested anymore. I've seen the odd images, videos, I don't know what you'd call it, S&M and stuff like that, in their gimp masks or whatever. I find that a bit weird if I'm honest, or people getting not hit as such, that's fine, but then when they are all dressed up in latex, or strapped up or whatever, I find that a bit weird".

Alternatively, the experience of Harry, after meeting up with a man he had exchanged SGI's with on Grindr:

"Where I have the pictures, I questioned how many years ago that picture was taken...also met people where you know, nice images but obnoxious personality...I would say it that happens, pictures where they look slightly younger, or last summer where they look slightly skinnier...I kind of said sorry you're not my type and goodbye...you know these aren't the pictures you sent me, you always get a picture where the hair was a bit better..."

To obtain a far more insightful view of the extreme dangers and criminal threats that SGI's represent to both children and some adults, the SOECA officers in Stage 2 now have their experiences, concerns and opinions brought to the fore, to bridge this chasm of missing data. While the Stage 1 and 3 findings only found a minority with negative feelings about SGI use, those five Stage 2 MPS officers had a great deal to offer this inquiry, about who is involved, and the ways in which SGI's are exploited for a variety of criminal intentions.

SGI's & online criminal abuse: a growing problem

Officer 4 expanded upon the extent and reasons, for SGI's increased role in the problem of online IIOC's:

"I would say it's growing, ever since the onset of social media, ever since now people have the phones, with the cameras to take selfies that is how to me, is how it's got bigger and bigger, because children now unfortunately will take a lot of self-generated images of themselves. They'll send it to people probably naively, a boyfriend at the time, girlfriend at the time, then it gets shared with the wider world, beyond their knowledge without them thinking about the long game and realising that's what's happened; and then they lose control of that imagery and then we'll find those images within the collections of paedophiles. I've definitely seen, dealt with cases, webcam shots, lots of different sites..."

Officer 4's words explicate how, what may have begun as a relatively innocent, and purportedly privileged, exchange of selfies, between adolescent sexual partners, often ends up within collections of online sex offenders. Bowlin's (2013) research, which estimated that 60% of privately exchanged selfies end up being shown to at least one other person, reinforces this point; as does the following:

"It's very common...swapping images amongst themselves, but like I said they could go on a jailbait site and get loads of similar images anyway, it's just everywhere" (Officer 2).

Nonetheless, online offending with SGI created IIOC's can be placed firmly in perspective, when it is considered that it frequently has its origins in the offline world of familial/domestic CSA:

"A lot of these images come from somewhere, they are not always off the internet, they are from an act which is rape. So, it's dad at home having sex with his daughter, and he takes a picture and then he gives it to someone he trusts, and that person passes it on...they come from different forms in the real world, before the internet can get involved. It's not just all online exposing yourself on the webcam" (Officer 3).

The problem of online CSA and IloC's, through the agency of SGI's, is certainly growing rapidly:

"...it's a common thing that I see. If you are defining it as a young boy or girl who has been convinced on a webcam, to show off various parts of their body...Where users who are doing the convincing are recording that footage from their home computer while it's displayed on their screen, and then that is going into a pool of indecent images and videos, and then being displayed on the internet and being distributed about. I see more and more captured webcam footage where children have obviously started exposing themselves in some way, shape or form, be it voluntarily, or because they've been cajoled into doing it, by people they chatted to. And, that footage being recorded and surfacing on other peoples' computers, who haven't necessarily made that happen...that then goes into circulation..." (Officer 5).

Selfies & webcams in the creation of IloC's/SGI's

For children and online criminals, SGI's represent visual, self-taken records of abuse and unlawful activities. Such online CSA has two main formats, and can have appalling consequences:

"You've got images taken by young people and shared among their friends or peers at school. There is a significant risk in that, because of what happens to that images once it is outside of the control of that child. There is another aspect where, you have a paedophile who is engaging with the young person in order to gain access to an indecent, or inappropriate image of that child. Once they have image, they can then blackmail or coerce that child into producing further more extreme images...I've seen children who have been forced to eat dog food, lick toilet seats, using large knives to cut themselves...they are trapped in abuse...and the abuse gets more and more extreme...The images that get taken, I've seen taken onto TOR...and on TOR there are websites that are solely dedicated to hurting children...and people join them to view videos and images

of children being hurt and children in distress...So they take the children, who, two years later they have now got eating dog food, in tears, and they'll take the images and distribute them, and share them on TOR for their enjoyment, if that's the right phrase, of other like-minded sick individuals" (Officer 1).

Criminal exploitation of SGI's stretches across the spectrum, from viewing and exchanging the leaked private sexual-selfies of callow boyfriends/girlfriends, to the depredations of blackmailers and degenerate sexual predators on the Dark Web, using the anonymity endowed by the unbreakable encryption of the TOR browser (Laden, 2014).

Sexting of sexual images privately, between adult partners, or adolescent boyfriend/girlfriends, comprises a potentially perilous and risky manoeuvre:

"Initially, right from the start they are possibly coercive, possibly abusive, depending on, I guess what the relationship between the boyfriend and girlfriend. If they are not at the initial stage abusive and coercive then there is always the prospect that it is going to become that, when the boyfriend then says 'I now want an image of you doing something else', or the relationship breaks down and then becomes a blackmail type scenario...also I see them photos, in that scenario, being picked up by paedophiles who identify the child, and will try to corrupt the child using photos taken from a boyfriend/girlfriend" (Officer 1).

Children can get easily drawn into creating indecent images of themselves via online messaging apps, like Omegle and Chatroulette, which randomly connect individuals to one another, around the world, either by text or video:

"What we see is, time and time again, they are clearly laughing, they sometimes get their own bits out without any grooming at all, and I'm not blaming the children here, it's those in education. Issue with them believing that, that's OK to them to do, because there is a guy there whose doing it, and it might be a cute guy. Well they might think he's eighteen or nineteen, but he's quite a good-looking guy, and then they might join in, and

that's the issue, the issue is the guy at the other end is probably recording, or could be recording, and that in itself becomes a form of currency either to pass on to his friends...or a form of currency with blackmailing the individual at webcam's other end" (Officer 5).

A particularly cunning, and duplicitous case of an online male paedophile, who had used webcams on SNS's, to dupe sexualized SGI's out of children, was the following:

"We went round there...it was apparent that he had a very, very unhealthy interest in this kind of material. Looked at his computer and there was vast reams of footage on there of children on webcams exposing themselves. Then, I delved into it a bit deeper and realised that he was posing as a child himself, to chat to other children, mainly boys, that was his interest, to chat to other children to get them to send images and it was quite apparent that he had formed relationships, online relationships and friendships, with some of these boys and was purporting to be one himself, in order to appear less of a threat. And, certainly there is no real suggestion that some of these boys had done it against their will...he used to pose as a young girl and get horny twelve, thirteen-year-old boys, to get their penis out and wank on camera. So, he was a middle-aged gay man, he was sexually interested and attracted to young boys...it's the perfect thing for him, isn't it? I'll pose as a young girl, they'll get their penises out for me, it's a win-win for me, and that's the dangers of it...you never know who you are chatting to; if you are speaking to strangers on the internet and you're willing to do that. You don't know who's on the other end...its shows the naivety, the gullibility of young children on the internet" (Officer 5).

Adult victims of online SGI abuse

The online dangers to adults are many, and the lack of police time and resources devoted to this aspect of the criminal abuse of SGI's helps many perpetrators escape justice:

"I'd always say that if it involves children, it's going to be a higher danger...there's definitely a risk to adults. There's sites where you can post your revenge porn, or there were, so you can put things on there, quite freely, and this is very easily searchable...it doesn't get anywhere near the funding or the attention in the way that images that involve children would do...the effects on adult, isn't going to be as robustly policed let's say, as if it was a child" (Officer 4).

These sentiments exposed how the short staffed and under-resourced police force cyber-crime teams were unable to investigate many incidences involving adult victims of SGI criminality. Furthermore, there is a significant flaw in the new revenge porn law, which was enacted in England and Wales in 2015. Namely, that it is only illegal to upload a sexual image of your ex-partner onto such a site without their consent; however, it is not illegal for the site to exist (in the US), or for the images to be displayed with their caustic commentaries or personal details appended; or for people to visit and view this abusive content, once posted (russellwebster.com, 2015).

The following case is a particularly vile incident of revenge porn, with sexual images of a female ex-partner, posted on a website, without the victim's consent or even knowledge. It occurred before England and Wales introduced a specific law criminalising it in 2015:

"I went on this website and there was a whole page, or pages set up, against this poor woman, and it was telling people to go round and rape her. She's a nurse, she works in this hospital, her daughters are six and eight, need raping as well. And then there were thousands, all her family photos were on there, thousands of people had been on this site and written comments about what they'd do to her and the daughters, and it was horrible.

And she'd been walking around totally clueless, it had been up for over a year, two years maybe...it was dealt with not by the revenge porn laws, but by other legislation" (Officer 2).

The extent of the problem can be gauged from the latest crime statistics for England & Wales, which estimated that 3.8 million cases of fraud, and two million incidents of illegal computer misuse, occurred between October 2015 and the end of March 2016 (ONS, 2016). Most of these incidents of computer misuse relate to hacking and computer viruses; only a minority were for crimes against adults involving SGI's, as in the revenge porn case cited, and others, i.e. cyber-stalking, cyber-trolling, sextortion, cyber-bullying and romance fraud etc.

The use of SGI's in online child grooming

The following example illuminates the way in which an online non-contact offender endeavoured to escalate to a contact CSA crime. He used SGI's on SNS's and messaging apps, to pursue his goals:

"I can remember dealing with a chap, he was quite young, twenty-eight or nine. South African chap, who was grooming young boys on different types of social media, in England. He was based in London, he had an interest in boys between the age of six and twelve. I think there were around thirty victims of this chap, who had gone online, chatting with him online on different chat sites. He would be quite open about the things what he wanted them to do. He would be offering them...trips to the cinema, buying them shoes, trainers, whatever. He'd send pornographic pictures of himself, and around six or seven did go on to send pornographic pictures back to him, just purely because a lot of them were intrigued by the whole online relationship anyway and it was definitely, for some of these children. I think they were well chosen by him, for want of a better word, in the fact that he would look at people who were saying online that they didn't have a toy, that they didn't have the top of the range clothing. So, he was giving them that ideal, the incentive that they would need to fulfil his needs, but he was wanting them to go and

meet him. He was making it clear that when the children did meet him, they would go back to his flat and engage in sexual activity. But he definitely wanted to make sure that they were children, and his way of doing that was to ensure that they were sending pictures of their genitalia to him. There's numerous cases like that to be honest...somebody will make that child, one way or another, send SGI's. That's the hook they need, and often the thing they want to have, to exploit that child further, because then it's always going to be potentially something to use against the child" (Officer 4).

In this horrific case, the intimate stages of the online child grooming process, employing indecent IloC's/SGI's on SNS's and messaging/imaging apps, is minutely detailed. However, what is truly shocking, is the realization that six or seven children were prepared to send indecent images of their penises to their abuser. Worse, they did so as an economic transaction, quid pro quo, to obtain material possessions in exchange for sending their SGI's. This manipulative online offender was, de facto, buying the children's sexual services via gifts or bribes, to obtain his IloC's, without coercion. Designer goods are so craved by children that some poorer ones were prepared to haggle SGI images of their own genitals, to obtain them.

The criminal motivations for online paedophiles, persuading, cajoling, or coercing children to perform sexual acts on webcams/selfies, and send them, were comprehensible in these terms:

"I can see the appeal being, that challenge of getting someone to do that, the grooming, the manipulating, the fact that no one else has ever seen that before, and you effectively created that, by convincing the child to do that" (Officer 5).

SNS's & message/image apps in the abuse of SGI's

The proliferation of SGI's on SNS's, and messaging/image apps, provide real opportunities for both contact, and non-contact offenders, to execute their crimes.

Hence:

"The paedophile attack on the child...what the internet has given the paedophile is access to many more potential victims and so, he can now go to a Social Networking Site, spam a thousand children on that site, get one response, see the vulnerability of that child, and so they have got their victim...as a result of the internet and that self-taken image, without the internet and the self-taken image, that paedophile may never go on to contact abuse that child...the opportunity is the internet and the vulnerability of the child"
(Officer 1).

The online world is here envisioned, as significantly amplifying the scope for dedicated child sexual abusers to reach many more victims than previously. Whereas, before Wi-Fi and smartphones/laptops, the grooming and abuse was severely limited by time, contacts known, and geographical location, now the online offenders' digital/cyber grasp, can extend to thousands of children throughout the world. Nevertheless, it is vital to consider this in the context that around 90% of sexually abused children in the UK, physically knew their attacker, with the largest number of assaults originating from within the family, or via a close family friend (Radford, et al., 2011). Indeed, the internet has now allowed some of these familial abusers to share the SGI visual records of their crimes, with other contact and non-contact CSA offenders.

The easy availability of SGI's and adult legal pornography on SNS/messaging apps, and the lack of an adequate response by the websites' owners, was excoriated, by Officer 3:

“You’ve to look where these images are popping up. Images are popping up on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, mainstream social media sites...they are a business at the end of the day, they are probably putting very little resources into stopping this going on. OK, they can’t possibly monitor everything...you can’t look at everyone’s interaction to pick it up...”

Statistics bear out Officer 3’s avowals; Facebook, in June 2016, had 14,495 employees worldwide, in fourteen offices, and 1.71 billion AMU’s (newsroom.fb, 2016). Few of these employees physically work in compliance, monitoring accounts that may contain IloC’s, or support terrorist sympathisers like Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL); this is because such monitoring is almost exclusively conducted by computer algorithms (Levin, 2016). Officer 3 went on to illustrate, the limitations of only employing algorithms:

“...you can do a word search to see whose speaking about what, fine then you might pick up certain words, but then certain words are innocent, for example the term ‘family fun’. Family fun can mean one thing, I might be looking for a day out at the local park...or I can be looking for a bit of family fun with this weekend on a nudist site, while looking to abuse some children. So, the word search business won’t work...it might be able to identify certain behaviour but not everything...”

Algorithms and word searching for inappropriate terms, as explained in the statement above, are an inadequate response by the giant internet corporations to the problem of online abusers exploiting SGI’s for their criminal enterprises.

SGI's & IIoC's on the Dark Web

The following case, given in an exposition by Officer 3, highlighted just one website of thousands on the Dark Web, accessible only by the encrypted TOR browser:

"There's a site called 'freeanimalsextube', you can go onto it, you can join, you can't get past that first wall, you can see a few pictures but you can't really get too far unless you join...once you've joined you can start sharing and meeting people with an interest in animals and having sex with them. The trouble is, a lot of those pictures of animals that are exchanged, have sex with kids, now they then start moving away from sharing the images with the animals in, the fourteen-year-old girl has sex with her pet, type image, to an eight-year-old girl has sex with her dad... if you are on a bestiality site, you are hardly going to start criticizing someone for posting those types of images, when you've just posted one about a cow being taken from behind, or a horse having a blow job".

This SOECA officer firmly believed that some non-contact offenders are drawn into IIoC's, by their furtive visits to this TOR based, bestiality website.

The Dark Web accessed through TOR, encrypted and anonymous, contains a host of illegitimate sites, from selling stolen CC details, purchasing illegal drugs for postal delivery from abroad, and, as previously highlighted, even the option to buy assassination attempts (Hurlburt & Bojanova, 2014). Research into the extent of SGI's and IIoC's on the Dark Web remains Spartan yet, but illegal pornography sites have been estimated to comprise 2.75% of all the TOR websites, while ones featuring abuse, consist of a further 2.2%; illegal drug purchasing sites (i.e. successors of the FBI busted, 'Silk Road' site), were the largest category, involving 15.4% (Owen, 2015). In addition to online images of CSA and IIoC's on TOR, there exists a multiplicity of perverted and illegal torture/bestiality pornography sites. An exemplar being 'Crush Porn', where women are videoed (often by themselves as SGI's), torturing small animals to death (e.g. rabbits, cats, monkeys, birds and hamsters etc.), in a sexualised sadistic manner. The unfortunate creatures are slowly crushed to death between women's

breasts and buttocks, or compressed to extinction under their high-heeled clad feet (Motherboard, 2014). This example certainly provides an influential riposte to proponents of Gay liberation theory, as an identity based NSM (Buechler, 1995; Pichardo, 1997), which has argued that the use of SGI's/online pornography has allowed greater sexual freedom for oppressed minorities like sexual fetish enthusiasts. Again, the deadly embrace of SGI's is evident, the freedom to enjoy consensual BDSM sex, indulge a foot-fetish, or share a passion for 'chubbies', comes entwined with the animal torture of 'snuff' SGI's in crush-porn on the Dark Web, or many other instances where online criminal abusers exploit the 4A's (anonymity, access, affordability, availability and now amateur creation) afforded by the internet (Davidson & Gottschalk, 2010), and the Dark Web in particular.

SGI's: views about 'the gateway' theory

The gateway theory is controversial, but has some adherents, although it is based on anecdotal assumptions: viewers progress on a nefarious journey, from first seeing more extreme pornography, to then finding the 'barely legal/teen porn' genre sexually stimulating, and then progressing on to viewing and downloading IIoC's, before eventually creating their own criminal CSA/SGI images. The role of SGI's is prominent in this gradual escalation into ever greater lawbreaking, as many of the IIoC's are self-taken pictures, or movie clips from webcams/smartphones, created by child-victims themselves or the adult wrongdoers.

Officer 5, rejected the proposition that most creators of SGI's, even children, were on the slippery slope to further offending with online IIoC's or CSA:

"I don't think, from the person making the image, that is perhaps going to be that much of a gateway. I don't think you are going to find young kids, sending erotic imagery to another kid or whatever, is then going to make them...but I think just because you've taken some pictures of yourself and sent them someone on the internet, means that you

are going to become addicted to child porn or get some children to send you picture...There's people with a predisposition for that and it's another place they can look, it's another different type of pornography".

This rejection of the gateway theory, postulates that online contact and non-contact offenders have those desires already ingrained within them, rather than having such sexual hankerings stoked by using SGI's. Officer 5's views resonate with the contested ideas of the German public health approach to online paedophilia, embodied in the 'Project Dunkelfeld/Don't Offend' initiatives (Quayle & Sinclair, 2012), raised earlier, whereby online paedophiles are given therapeutic counselling to prevent them from moving from fantasy desires, to committing a contact/non-contact CSA crime. Sexual attraction to children is arguably perceived as an illegal and immoral ingrained sexuality, that can however be controlled with appropriate psychological or psychiatric counselling/conditioning.

The greater access and anonymity of the internet, and the rise of children producing SGI's on Wi-Fi connected smartphones and laptops, has afforded online paedophiles with pre-existing sexual desires towards children, ever greater opportunities to carry out offences. The ideas formulated by Davidson & Gottschalk (2010) on the importance of the 4A's in facilitating online CSA, should now include a fifth, the rise of amateur production (SGI's), as all seem extremely relevant here. For Officer 5:

"I think the willingness of children to expose themselves on the internet, has created a market that wasn't there previously for people with that sexual interest in children, to have more access to it. Child pornography, ten-to-fifteen years ago, was badly recorded, like sneaky photos and things like that, it wasn't very sophisticated. Now it's very sophisticated in terms of the quality of the images, the quality of the video because of the proliferation of camera phones and high quality cameras and the cheapness of them, and the fact that a lot of those phones and things like that, can go straight into the internet and post those images and videos where they need to be. And, putting them in the hands of children who can take those pictures themselves, and then share them and get them out

on the internet, means that those with that interest have now got a whole new market that was never there before; the voyeuristic, 'I like watching young girls perform on webcam', and they are doing it. They are not doing you could argue, that they are sometimes being cajoled into it, but not all the time and certainly some of the videos I've had to look at, they are enjoying it, they are enjoying putting on a show. They may well be the victims of a pack mentality, of people chatting to them but, no one's holding them down and making them do it. And, I think that young people can go and do that, provide that has created an unintended market of dirty old men, who like to look at young girls exposing themselves on webcams".

One of the most challenging issues, that arose from the SOECA officers' testimony in Stage 2, was the jarring juxtaposition of learning that some of the victims of online CSA, particularly those who created webcam produced SGI material, actively enjoyed, or relished, the sexual abuse as it took place.

Officer 4, concurred with the sentiment that illegal images of children and SGI's do not lead more people on to the path of ratcheting-up offending, against children:

"I personally don't believe in the whole gateway idea myself. I do think that if someone has a predilection for sexual interest in children, that is what they have.... I don't believe that if you are looking at babies, pictures of a child, that you are then over the years, progress into penetrative imagery of a child...there has to be that desire at the start. I don't think it's something that's going to be created by...illegal images of children".

Alleviating the criminal exploitation of SGI's

In addition to the transformational reboot of school PSHE/SRE that all five SOECA officers believed necessary to improve knowledge about digital/online health, safety and privacy; several other approaches in relation to reducing the potential damage caused by SGI's, were enunciated, including:

UK laws on SGI's that Social Policy makers need to reconsider

One limiting aspect, of current UK laws on IloC's, which needs modification, is where certain types of online images of children, are currently not classified as proscribed. Consequently:

"What we tend to see...is the gorier pictures, the pictures taken at morgues etc. ...which currently, where there is no offense of having a picture of a child in a morgue..." (Officer 3).

Another flawed statute, was the 2015 outlawing of revenge porn³², in England and Wales. The criminalisation of revenge porn, as a specific entity, was welcomed:

"I think it's a good thing because, as with everything, it gives something a label, and they can do something about it...now there is the revenge porn legislation, people are going to know that if they are the victim of someone sending, posting pictures of them without their consent, then there's something they can go to the police with, tangible, to say this is what has happened, this is what I think it is..." (Officer 5).

However, it is only an offence to upload revenge porn images, not to host them on a website, or view them. The Liberal-Democrats have also announced the intention to table an amendment to the policing and crime bill, currently at its report stage in the current parliament³³, to make threatening to release intimate images, including SGI's, a criminal offence (Townsend, 2016).

³² As part of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015.

³³ As of December 2016

Police deployment of SGI's: Agent provocateurs & entrapment?

The adoption of a hugely provocative future tactic was advocated by Officer 5; namely, the ability to send IIoC's already on police files to offenders, in response to being sent them by online paedophiles, as one manoeuvre in their investigative stratagems, with fake child avatar profiles. Such a proposition is however, in polar opposition to current practice:

"We've had conversations in the office many, many times about the morality of doing it. My view, which is, I hasten to add, not the view of the Metropolitan Police or the ethics committee that we've consulted with, is that if it's out there, we should be able to send it. If it's already out there, we just need to be able to do that, because we'd be able to double our credibility online. We'd be able to double the amount of people that we identify, are in possession of indecent images. We'd clean-up! We've got to be very careful and very smart, about how we operate but, if we could, willy-nilly, send indecent images out, as a means of showing our legitimacy online, we'd clean-up..." (Officer 5).

The work of the officer's in SOECA, involves taking on the avatars of children, to develop online relationships with suspected offenders, to apprehend those exchanging IIoC's, attempting to lure them out of children, or conducting online grooming activities. Their inability to send a sexualized selfie, as part of this interaction process, between undercover officer and suspected offender, may severely retard the detectives' ability to endow their 'child' avatars with genuine verisimilitude. With the latest research from Ofcom (2016), showing that eight-out-of-ten 12-15yo's, now have a smartphone, the problem is very grave. Exactly how many potential apprehensions of offenders, are currently lost to investigators, because of their inability to reciprocate, after being sent an IIoC, and asked for one in return, is unknown. The logic is: if there are IIoC's already on the CAID database, why not use them for something good, especially if sending one, prevents further online CSA, the creation of more IIoC's, or halts a cyber-groomer from meeting up with a child and then performing a contact CSA? The motto of the Roman poet, Ovid, encapsulates this

controversial concept: *'Exitus acta probat'*, or roughly, 'the ends justify the means' (Latin Dictionary, 2008). In opposition to such a move, is the potent argument, that the investigating detectives would be acting as agent provocateurs, and that they were entrapping the alleged offenders they were interacting with via their fake child avatars; so, enticing them to commit CSA/grooming crimes, that they would not have done otherwise.

The imbalance, between the power of an online sex offender, and the effectiveness of the investigating police officers, is illustrated by this actual case of a gay male offender:

"He would also have footage of girls on webcams that he would then send to them, because we can't do that, as law enforcement, we can't send indecent images to other people to get them to, we are not allowed. But he doesn't have any restrictions really, apart from it being against the law, in terms of procedurally, he can do what the hell he wants. So, he had stock footage, if you like, of girls performing on webcam, that he'd send to them, as a way of getting them to send footage back. A genius way of doing it, if you think about it" (Officer 5).

The potential impact of greater governmental restrictions of SGI's

The SOECA interviewees divided four-to-one in their views about the future introduction, and possible success, of greater censorship and blocking of online pornography/SGI's by national governments, smartphone/laptop manufacturers, and the giant US dominated internet corporations, known as GAFA: Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple (Chibber, 2014). The minority view was:

"For me, it's so serious SGI's, that devices should have parental controls installed on them, at manufacturing stage...the next generation of children, the nine-to-ten-year-olds...the manufacturers should be giving parental control on that...the parental control would be one button, that is password protected by the parents...and then, what it is saying to that child is, that you take any photo on that device, and it will be sent to this

email account which is controlled by the parents. 'Go and use it as you wish, but don't take any photos that you wouldn't want me to see, 'cos I'll see it'. And, I think we would stop SGI's...they are not going to do something that they don't want their parents to see...there are already apps that parents can install to do this, there's one called SelfieCop...but I think the OS (operating system), should be putting them in as an option" (Officer 1).

Officer 1 also lamented the failure of the Conservative-Liberal Coalition Government (2010-15), to bring in greater police, and security service powers to update the RIPA 2000.

"The bill last year that the government didn't get through around the disclosure of information by communication provider, has already had significant impact on the effectiveness of police to investigate abuse of children on the internet. Because that has not been brought to implementation, there are many hundreds, or thousands, of paedophiles, including people I cannot identify, who are abusing children; that I cannot identify unless this legislation is in place...Unless you are willing to accept that children are being raped, that we can't identify by any other means...then let's not have it" (Officer 1).

However, the IPA 2016 received Royal Assent recently, passed by Theresa May's Conservative government, and grants access to metadata by GCHQ, i.e. not direct verbatim recordings, or access to actual texts, but instead the ability to scrutinize where you have been online, on what date and time, and for how long. It had been derided as the 'Snoopers Charter', by its many critics in the media, and parliamentary opposition (Travis, 2016).

The four remaining SOECA officers, all deviated from Officer 1's sentiments, and concurred with this view, about the ineffectiveness of any blocking by governments or GAFA:

“My understanding of the way these ideas are sold to politicians is that, to be honest, they are told that it can do these things, but I don’t think it works the way that, Google is supposed now to filter of block things. I know personally, with very little knowledge, that you can get round everything that they are trying to suggest you could do...”
(Officer 4).

And the following hostile stance, on the IPA 2016 before it reached the statute book:

“As far as trying to censor anything, it’s never going to be met with open arms by the wider public in general...to try and bring these things in, it’s all nice to suggest it but, I think actually to get it to either: a) work, or b), to be accepted, is almost impossible scenario” (Officer 4).

The majority opinion was that overhauling PSHE/SRE at school, was a far more efficacious technique for protecting children from online dangers, including those presented by SGI’s. Such a manoeuvre would not inflame the highly contentious and impassioned debate covered in the literature review, concerning the status of SGI’s/online pornography as a basic human right, as part of citizens’ free speech, or the oppositional stance, that pornography is not ‘speech’, but rather a corrupting and degenerate force which promotes family breakdown and a host of immoral and dangerous perversions. This also encompasses the ideological clash between the argument of Mill (1859), that the state has no right to criminalise what a citizen does in private, including here the use of SGI’s, as long as no one has been harmed, and the contra view, that the state does have a legal duty to interfere in people’s private activities, in order to uphold the moral standards of the day; this appraisal was enunciated by Lord Devlin in his attack on the findings of the 1957 Wolfenden Report, in the early 1960’s (Bull, 2008).

The role of CAID in reducing the criminal abuse of SGI's

One promising area of development, in the UK police's arsenal to oppose internet CSA, IIOC creation and viewing, and online child grooming, is the recent creation and steady expansion of CAID, for law enforcement to consult, to help with victim identification:

"We are moving forward looking at our own victim identification procedures etc. OK, we don't do a lot of work into Victim ID as a police force, this thing called CAID, a new national program that's being rolled out. In the past, it's been pretty much in the air but...this should have been in place full stop. Every picture is someone's child, whether it's someone who has done it willingly, at the end of a webcam, self-generated, or someone who has been held down and raped" (Officer 3).

Whereas, pre-CAID, it took three days to review 10,000 suspicious images, the same task can now be performed in only one hour (The Home Office, 2015).

SGI's: Their overall impact on individuals & society

It would be all too meretricious, after this analysis, to conclude that all SGI's represent an abhorrent and appalling danger to all children and adults. However, the terrible accounts of online criminal SGI abuse, furnished by the SOECA officers, need to be considered against the other findings, from the Stage 1 and 3 fieldworks. None of the participants in Stage 3, had experienced any genuinely disturbing incidents in their SGI use; and from Stage 1, only 2.9% (9/311) of SGI users, reported having negative experiences overall with such images, per [Chart 23](#). Online pornography/SGI's are acceptable in the view of Officer 5, which was representative of all but one of his colleagues:

"Perhaps it's caused problems, but I would say the number of problems it's causing, vastly disproportionate to the amount of enjoyment and pleasure, to millions and millions of people across the world. Maybe a bit more regulation, about file sharing and

things like that, just to stop the spread of child pornography, but you are never really going to stop it. The responsibility is on ISP's and law enforcement, to try and manage that".

Officer 5's sentiments seem to reinforce the conceptualisation of SGI's/online pornography as becoming just another element of mainstream culture and recreational activities. McNair (2013), would surely feel justified, from the cultural studies perspective, in his analysis of the normalisation of online pornography; especially as it is seen principally, as a force for good in society. Likewise, Wilson's (1980) views on non-work recreation are worth considering, where sexual pleasure has become a key element in the self-fulfilment leisure pastimes of millions of internet users, pursued through online pornography and SGI viewing/creation. From a more critical stance, a later Marxist economic interpretation would conclude that capitalism has subsumed pleasure, libido, masturbation and a new form of mass leisure into itself, with the aim of maintaining profits and domination by the ruling class (Caffentzis, 2005).

PSHE/SRE & the educational role of SGI's

The use of SGI's as a possible educational tool is certainly a highly-contested concept, best divided into two discrete areas. Firstly, that the promotion of online safety, privacy, sexual health and issues surrounding online pornography/SGI's, should be dealt with in schools, via PSHE/SRE. Secondly, the question of whether adolescents and adults can learn anything useful about sex and relationships from viewing online pornography/SGI's.

Online legal pornography and SGI's are increasingly viewed by older children in the UK, with research by Martellozzo et al (2016), finding that 65% of 16yo's had been viewers; therefore, the debate surrounding the topic of online pornography's/SGI's educational place in schools' PSHE classes becomes more critical and urgent. The

creation and sharing of SGI's by children raises concerns about self-incrimination by many hapless adolescents, technically guilty of creating, sharing, or viewing IloC's (of themselves, or their sexual partners). Martellozzo et al's (Ibid), study also exposed the fact that 7% of children, had shared a SGI of themselves online; a revelation which reinforces the necessity to improve school PSHE classes on these issues. Furthermore, OFSTED (2013), issued a report in which 40% of 341 observed lessons, assemblies or activities on PSHE (for five to eighteen-year-olds), were graded as either inadequate, or required improving.

Table 15 showed that 24.5% (67/273) of SGI users in Stage 1, accessed their images for educational purposes, and a further 65.3% (190/291), also stated that they did so out of curiosity. These findings have uncovered significant quantities of online SGI users, both wanting to find out more about sex, and using amateur pornography to satiate these requirements. Although whether they succeeded in their goal is a moot point, as these images were designed primarily for sexual stimulation (86.1%-255/296), and masturbation (91.9%-274/298), and not as educational instruction manuals, per Table 15.

Officer 3 agreed that adult online pornography could be a useful potential educational tool, but expressed real concerns about the alarming propensity of LGBT children using SGI's:

"I think a lot more could be done to assist children who are gay, rather than having to be forced perhaps to go online. And again, this is an issue we have with gay children who go online and will go seeking. 'I can't talk to my usual group of school friends on Twitter over here, so I'm going to go here to this male adult gay' (site), and there they are exposed...all of a sudden now, they are not in that safe group".

Online pornography/SGI's, were perceived in a dialectical manner in educational terms, by most of the Stage 2 and 3 interviewees; considered as useful and pleasurable to many adults, and concurrently, potentially very harmful to others, particularly adolescents; an exquisite rose for most, with a viciously sharp thorn on its stem, for others. As Cathy explained:

"Inevitably they will learn things that they wouldn't have previously found out. If you compare that to my education of sex, which was, I think, I once saw a book that my sister had when she was pregnant, that had photographs of a baby coming out, that was one thing I saw. The other thing was one of my brothers' 'page three' magazines...I didn't know what things were named, I didn't see any moving images. I was clueless...I think it's useful to learn these things...the more you know about it the better educated you are, and you know what to expect, you know what to do. The downside is, for people, if they are learning about sex, it implies they haven't got that much experience of sex, then it puts pressure on them because they think that it's normal, whereas probably, actually most people's sexual experiences are much less...it depends on what the pornography/Self-Generated images are...I once seen one of a woman having multiple orgasms. Now if a teenager thinks that's normal sex, they are going to be gravely disappointed when the first few time, probably many times, the woman doesn't cum at all, let alone like, starts having multiple orgasms! So, it puts a lot of pressure on people around what normal sex looks like. Normal sex may look a lot duller, oh not duller, different in comparison to what Self-Generated stuff is".

Dave vehemently expostulated that school PSHE/SRE, should deal with issues surrounding online pornography/SGI's:

"...the fact is, sex is a major part of peoples' lives and when you are talking about dealing with the issues of pornography...a twelve-year-old can pick up their phone and look at porn, when I was twelve if I wanted to look at porn it would be bloody difficult, or I might nick a magazine...I think sex should be discussed, more open and why can't a teacher...sit there and say 'OK, who's watched pornography'? We could talk about how this is not real life. Even some clarification, 'you do know that this is not real life, you do know that these are people who are paid to do it'... all the Scandinavian countries have far less teenage pregnancies than here and they have good sexual education. I believe passionately that schools should not be able to opt out on the grounds of what? No, it's nothing to do with the parents".

SGI's: A useful mechanism for young people to find out about sex?

Chart 29 showed the responses on the survey, to the proposition that SGI's could be a useful mechanism for young people to find out about sex.

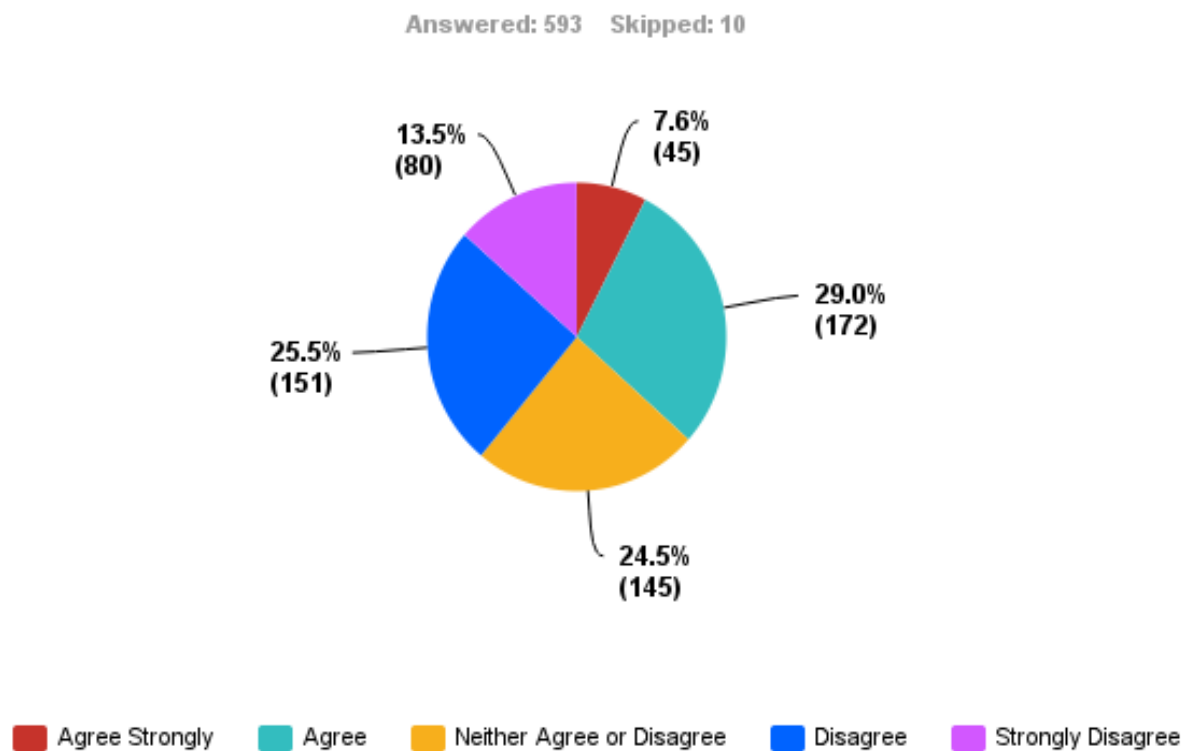


Chart 29 SGI's could be a useful mechanism for young people to find out about sex

The combined agrees in Chart 29, that SGI's could be a useful educational tool, totalled 36.6% (217/593), while the combined disagrees totalled 38.5% (231/593); almost an equilibrium between the two opposing views. These findings suggest there would undoubtedly be fierce opposition, from a section of citizens, towards including the topic of online pornography/SGI's in school PSHE classes. Enlarging the scope of PSHE, to include issues surrounding SGI's, would go some way to implementing the recommendations of the Education Select Committee, which called for compulsory sex education in all Britain's primary and secondary schools; currently, SRE is only compulsory for those aged eleven and over (Gov.uk, 2016). They also recommended that it should be applied in all schools, not just those who are compelled to adhere to

the National Curriculum. Their report criticized the government's weak PSHE/SRE policy, in the face of the increasing online sexualisation of children (Riley-Smith, 2015). A crosstab of gender, and whether SGI's could be a useful mechanism for finding out about sex, produced the following results, in [Chart 30](#):

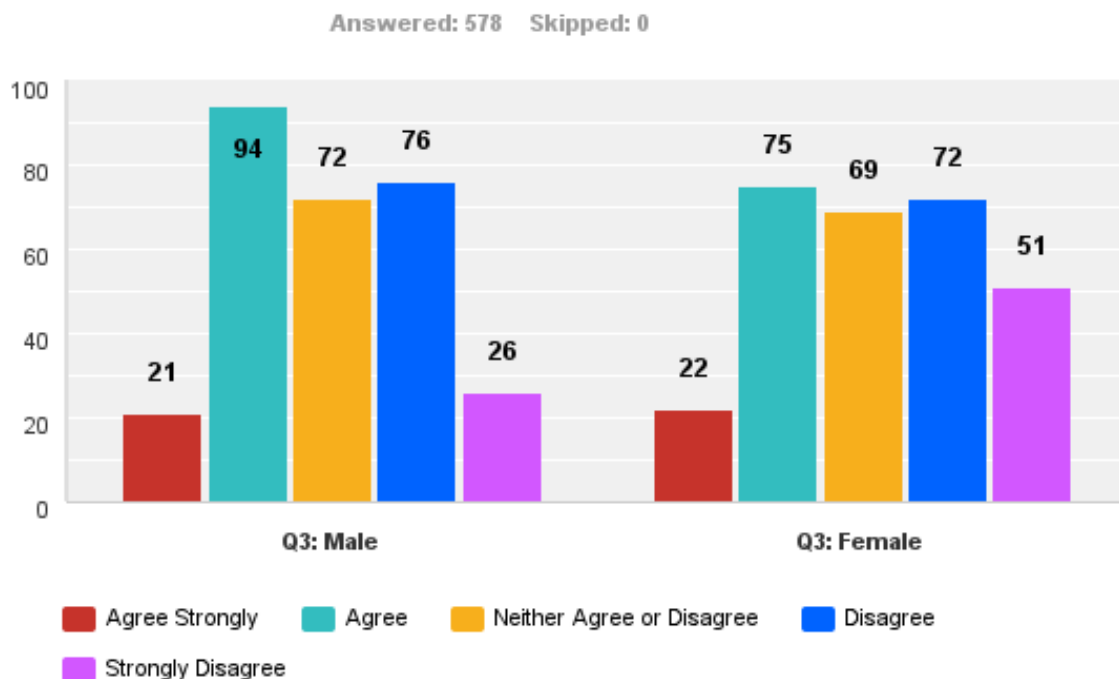


Chart 30 Crosstab of gender and whether SGI's could be a useful tool for young people finding out about sex

[Chart 30](#) showed that 17.6% (51/289) of females, strongly disagreed with the possibility that SGI's could be used as an educational tool, as compared to only 9% (26/289), of males.

When a crosstab of age, and SGI's as an educational tool, was performed, just focussing on the 20-29's, and the 40-49's, a wide disparity is evident in Table 18:

Table 18 Crosstab of age and whether SGI's could be a useful tool for young people finding out about sex

	Agree Strongly (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Total
Q2: 20-29 (A)	8.1% 31	32.0% 123	23.2% 89	24.7% 95	12.0% 46	87.1% 384
Q2: 40-49 (B)	1.8% 1	19.3% 11	29.8% 17	36.8% 21	12.3% 7	12.9% 57
Total Respondents	32	134	106	116	53	441

Table 18's data revealed that 40.1% (154/384) of the younger age category, agreed that SGI's could be educational for young people, while conversely, only 21.1% (12/57) of the 40-49's, did (the results marginally miss being statistically significant, $p=.060$). These survey findings demonstrated that younger adults are far more agreeable to SGI's potential use for educational reasons, than the middle-aged. Dave, in his mid-fifties, represented the 49.2% (28/57), of 40-49's, who disagreed with the conception of SGI's, as a potential educational tool:

"You don't learn from online porn because in real life, for instance, you'd have to work, when a man...you have to spend a lot of time get her excited usually, and if you look at porn, the woman is sucking your cock after two minutes. It could actually give the wrong message; women are not like that at all. I think it's actually a bad education in that sense...also they tend to have sex without condoms, that's pretty bad too, that's worrying...you might learn the mechanics if a thirteen-year-old didn't know where, how you have sex, they might learn about the basics of how people are having sex, you don't learn how it really works...and some people may do the wrong thing as a consequence..."

In the light of the age/educational findings of this research, as the years unfold before us and older generations die off, both online pornography/SGI's use, and its increasing acceptance as a viable learning mechanism for sex, will become preponderant. This could occur in schools' PSHE provision, and through the informal absorption/socialisation mechanism with personal use of SGI's.

Promoting online digital privacy, safety & security

The issues surrounding SGI's certainly do need to be communicated to young people, along with sexual health, online privacy and digital safety procedures. Two recent reports illustrate why the reform of PSHE is such a convincing issue. Firstly, identity theft in the UK, for young people under thirty, more than doubled between 2010 and 2015, from 11,000 cases a year, to 23,599 (Cifas, 2016). Secondly, the average 5-15yo, now spends more time online in a week (15hrs), than watching TV for the first time (13hrs 36mins) (ofcom, 2016). The velocity of online technological advances has already left school PSHE provision, in terms of online pornography/SGI's and digital privacy and safety, looking, at best, inadequate, and at worst, antediluvian.

All the interviewees in Stages 2 and 3, comprehensively endorsed learning about the issues and dangers of SGI's, in school PSHE classes, and for adults too, through public health campaigns.

Jack made a thought-provoking point about online pornography/SGI's issues, in PSHE classes:

"Anything that's regarding about how sexuality is lived...etiquettes that relates to sexuality online, that should be addressed in schools and in general...I think it's going to be more of a matter of educating the teachers rather than the kids. These are pretty much sure that the kids will more educated on platforms, and things that can be done online, in terms of sharing naked pictures and pornographic material. They will be more educated than the teachers themselves".

Jack's incisive comments paint an alarming picture of internet savvy kids who have left their educators far behind them, in their experiences, knowledge and skills with online apps and devices, used sometimes to share pornography/SGI's.

Cathy considered the pros and cons, of teaching about issues surrounding SGI's and online pornography in PSHE/SRE classes in school:

"You can see these things different ways can't you, it could be liberating for young people. We've been historically quite prudish as a nation...about sex in previous generations...people didn't know what to expect. My grandma's favourite quote was 'I lifted my nightie up and let my grandad do his business'. Her husband, not her grandad by the way (laughs). That implies no sexual enjoyment, it implies ignorance about the body, you know women didn't know with pregnancy and childbirth what to expect, the dangers. If you are educated you can deal with these things better, so there is a line that says that it could do them good, because they will be liberated. On the other hand, you know, it's got potential dangers if its computer generated and transmitted, there are cases where people have done that, and then people have used it to blackmail them".

Two of the SOECA officers', made similar salient points about the role of PSHE, and raising awareness of issues with SGI's:

"I'm not a big believer in censorship... as people will get round it, and it just pushes the problem elsewhere...into the underground... People will always find a way, it doesn't matter what the government will do...To deal with it you've got to go in at the schools...Personal Social Education...have an input around the fact that an 'indecent', is someone under the age of eighteen. Just because you can have sex at sixteen doesn't mean that you are allowed to send an image of yourself naked, to another person" (Officer 5).

And he elaborated upon the message that needed hammering home in PSHE:

"You never know how a relationship is going to pan out, and you never know if someone is going to turn nasty...and send those pictures that you sent in good faith, out to others or post on the internet, which could affect you in employment, social, family, your

current relationship ...there is a bit of risk to it...in terms of your social network footprint...employers are starting to look at that. There's a lot of the companies in America where, part of your application process, is to reveal them your social media accounts so they can check if there's anything on there that might not comply with what the company's ethos is...you've got to appreciate that what you put out there, stays out there, and it may be looked at by someone in charge of giving you a job in future and, if you've reacted like a twat on the internet in the past, that prevents you getting a job".

While Officer 4 commented:

"The solution for things like that, that involve children especially, it has to be through education, more of it yes. It has to be looked at as a key part of the syllabus maybe, be a part of the curriculum...and try to get engaged more with the parents...I often believe that parents are not fully aware of what children are doing online. There is a schools' liaison officer within every school in London, I believe, and I know that they are trying to put together packages which they can deliver from a policing perspective...that means we'll take that from you, that nice flashy iPhone that your parents bought you, we'll take it off you and destroy it, because you have that type of imagery on it".

Learning from SGI's?

The second aspect of SGI's and pedagogy, was the possibility of individuals learning about sex, while personally using the material themselves. This is much more ferociously contested prospect than the already fractious debate about SGI's and PSHE. When the dangers to children using SGI's, as well as all the other health and online safety/digital security issues for adults, are added into the reckoning, we are left with a confused, divisive and opaque picture. However, to repeat an earlier aphorism, online pornography/SGI's are not predominantly created for educational and informational purposes, but rather for pleasure, entertainment, masturbation and sexual fulfilment, as can be seen in [Table 19](#) on the next page, from the survey.

Therefore, denouncing SGI's for being inadequate educationally, is akin to a dairy farmer blaming a bull for not providing enough milk.

Table 19 How online pornography users use their materials

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Total
Sexual stimulation	86.1% 255	13.9% 41	296
Masturbation	91.9% 274	8.1% 24	298
With your sexual partner/s	37.0% 104	63.0% 177	281
For collecting purposes	8.1% 22	91.9% 250	272
For Research reasons	14.2% 38	85.8% 230	268
To satisfy curiosity	65.3% 190	34.7% 101	291
For educational reasons	24.5% 67	75.5% 206	273
As a social pastime with friends	10.4% 28	89.6% 242	270
For humorous reasons	28.2% 77	71.8% 196	273
To make friends and / or meet people with similar interests	13.3% 36	86.7% 235	271
Dating	11.3% 31	88.7% 243	274
Hooking-up for sex	21.7% 60	78.3% 217	277

Nevertheless, Table 19 indicated that 24.5% (67/273) of the survey's SGI users did use these images for educational reasons, suggesting many seek to supplement the inadequate knowledge they received during PSHE/SRE at school, and from their parents in the home. The point is fortified by the high showing of 'to satisfy curiosity' (65.3%-190/291) in how SGI's were used; after all, people are only curious about topics

when they have insufficient information about them. This discovery suggests many internet users are turning to SGI's for auto-didactic purposes, finding out about sex in a personal and private exploration of online materials, to rectify deficiencies in their basic sexual literacy levels. Such discoveries seem to be only a click away in the pornified online multi-media/social-media world (Paasonen, et al., 2007). Indeed, although SGI's may be easy to access, perhaps they are only the latest manifestation of the ubiquitous, ever-present, erotic object d'art or monuments that humans seem to have produced and admired since daubing ancient cave-walls, painting the sexualised graffiti on the walls of Roman era-Pompeii (Tang, 1999), or creating the Cerne Abbas 'giant' in Wessex, England (Cooper, 1984).

Children viewing SGI's

Chart 22 earlier revealed some disturbing data about the age at which SGI users in Stage 1 had first seen SGI's. Among 307 SGI users, the two largest answers were age groups 14-15, at 26.7% (82/307), and 16-17, on 23.1% (71/307). All the categories under the age of thirteen, when combined, came to 18.3% (56/307), first seeing SGI's at this age or under.

[Chart 22](#) also divulged that 45% (138/307) of SGI users had first seen one while under sixteen-years old. These findings augment the need for a change to the current educational PSHE/SRE curriculum; as does the potential hazard for adolescents of producing self-incriminating and illegal IloC's of themselves and sending them online. Although it is reassuring that findings from Ofcom (2016) on children's use of internet media, revealed that 96% of parents of 5-15yo's managed/controlled their child's online usage in some way, and a further 92% of them had spoken to their child (12-15's), about online safety issues.

Perhaps the most worrying finding from [Chart 22](#), is that 3.6% of the SGI users, had first seen this material at age eleven, or under. The safeguarding issues in terms of child protection, which these discoveries throw up are crucial. The question of whether PSHE, entailing online digital privacy and safety issues and about online

pornography/SGI's and sex education, should be extended to infants, while at primary school, is likely to provoke some bitter confrontations among rival groups: parents, educationalists, religious elders, child protection experts, health professionals, the police and parliamentarians etc. However, if one adolescent is prevented from sending a sexually explicit image of themselves to another online person, possibly a child grooming paedophile seeking to commit a contact CSA, then such a paradigm shift in PSHE/SRE policy for primary schools would surely be highly welcome.

Conclusions

This chapter has established that the great majority of SGI users in Stage 1, and all the participants in Stage 3 had experienced few incidences of negativity, or illegality, with the SGI's they used. Although these participants were aware of the jeopardy surrounding amateur pornography, the most common negative response during Stage 3 was a sense of uneasiness, or weirdness, about some online contact in their uses of SGI's. However, for a minority of adult users and children, SGI's represent an extreme hazard when they fall into the hands of those who seek to exploit them as weapons in their arsenals of criminal abuse materiel.

The five SOECA officers shed light on this largely hidden minority of online victims of SGI misuse. They confirmed that Wi-Fi mobile device connectivity, the laptop with its webcam, and the proliferation of the smartphone among most adults and many children, had led to a dramatic growth of abusive and illicit SGI's, doubling-up as visual records of CSA and ILoC's, in the last decade.

The SGI selfie, via the smartphone, has become one of the main dangers to children in the UK. Most privately sent ones, later get leaked onto the internet, at some point. This can lead to cyber-bullying and trolling, sextortion, and blackmail etc. when they fall into the hands of the online abuser. Webcam sex, largely used to create short movie clips, instead of the still selfie, can be highly treacherous too, particularly for children; online abusers will inveigle images out of their victims, and use them for all the illicit

actions previously stated, and for online child grooming. Online pornography/SGI's have become widely viewable on SNS's and messaging/imaging apps; those who do not want to see these images, now have little choice, as they are posted on their newsfeeds/timelines; while those with unlawful intentions can use these platforms to harvest images, conduct child grooming operations, or use fake avatars to convince children and vulnerable adults to send SGI's/IloC's of themselves.

Police resources in all areas: financial, personnel, and technological, have been slashed repeatedly, in the UK since 2008, and are principally focussed on child-victims, rather than adults.

Adults, who use SGI's incautiously, face many similar hazards to children, excluding CSA, but with additional menaces of cyber-stalking, revenge porn, and romance fraud etc. Adult victims of online SGI abuse are less likely to see their tormentors brought to justice, because of the resourcing priorities of law enforcement agencies. Although cyber-stalking and revenge porn have now become named and prohibited offences in England and Wales, the latter's statute was framed rather feebly.

Technological advances, particularly in unbreakable encryption, have made the job of law enforcement officers increasing difficult too. The TOR browser allows the nefarious activities of many illicit SGI exploiters to remain largely hidden on the Dark Web, totally anonymous from police investigations. The rise of similar levels of end-to-end encryption on SNS's and messaging/image apps, already existent on WhatsApp, but soon to spread wider, will totally eradicate the ability to see any CSA/IloC transmitted, or to trace the source device where it originated.

One of the most powerful prospective tools in a campaign to either reduce, or eliminate, much of the criminal exploitation of SGI's, is the expansion and transformation of PSHE/SRE in the formal school curriculum; it could cover the issues of online digital privacy, health and safety, and the hazards and issues surrounding online pornography/SGI's, among UK schoolchildren. This would have an enormous

impact on adumbrating the opportunities for online abusers, to succeed in the criminal exploitation of amateur images.

The current state of PSHE/SRE, in the UK, is parlous in many respects. It only becomes compulsory in secondary schools for eleven-year-olds and higher. Worse, although included in the National Curriculum, the quality of the education provided was found to be inadequate in 40% of cases (OFSTED, 2013). Moreover, the National Curriculum does not apply to the 7% of children who go to private schools, nor to any of the increasing numbers of schools that are converting to Academy status, or the new Free Schools. Successive governments have allowed this scandalous situation to continue.

This research uncovered a significant minority of SGI users, around a quarter from Stage 1, who access the images for educational purposes. Perhaps this would not be necessary if the current Conservative government of Mrs May fixed the condition of PSHE/SRE, in UK schools?

Finally, another suggested solution to the dark-side of SGI's is banning and censorship of online pornography/SGI's, for under-eighteens. This could be ISP's blocking pornography websites, hardware and software controls pre-installed on devices' OS's, or more robust age-verification procedures to gain access to the websites where images are hosted. Most of the Stage 2 and 3 interviewees, but not all, believed that such manoeuvres would be ineffective.

Next, we move on to the conclusion of this thesis, where the main research aims and objectives are restated and answered, where possible. Also, some social policy suggestions are formulated based on the findings of this investigation.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Overview of the research methodology & ethics

The four theoretical underpinnings necessary for an overall research strategy and individual research methods are: ontology, epistemology, paradigms and axiology. However, the mixed research method approach adopted by this SGI's study was firmly anchored in the pragmatic worldview stance, i.e. both the overall strategy, and the choice of specific methods, were dictated by considerations of 'what works best' (Creswell, 2009). If the various goals of the study could be attained most effectively through the incorporation of one method rather than another, then it was selected without any dogmatic theoretical constraints, deriving from a 'purist' interpretation of the four methodological underpinnings.

Thus, this investigation into SGI's rejected the ontological vision that all human behaviour is controlled by external social forces, and the counter-view, that it is all socially constructed by individuals in interactions with others, based on subjective meanings and understandings. Leading on from this, knowledge about SGI's was not seen as being of a type that could only be ascertained by the employment of exclusively quantitative or qualitative research methods (Onwuegbuzie & Leach, 2005). Hence, epistemologically, an online social survey was used in Stage 1, whilst semi-structured interviews were adopted for the Stage 2 and 3 fieldworks to uncover all types of knowledge, by any means deemed appropriate and necessary.

No crusading *a priori* values, in axiological terms, existed before the research objectives into SGI's were formulated or investigated (Mertens, et al., 2010). Despite some subjective leanings towards social, political and economic libertarianism, the attempt was made, although perhaps not always perfectly executed, to let the findings speak for themselves. The cudgels of righteous indignation to transform the oppression of

minorities, following critical theory, were not taken-up in this investigation into the impact of SGI's. Indeed, the overall findings revealed that for most adult users, 'citizen-porn' (McNair, 2013), has been a benefit, in terms of their sexual liberation, political, legal, social and economic freedoms. However, another key finding is SGI's dual-nature, as for a minority of adults and many children, they simultaneously represent a grave hazard and occasionally a lethal danger.

Before the three stages of fieldwork were executed, each went through a separate, and rigorous testing and approval process, via the universities Ethics Sub-Committee. The six core ethical principles of the ESRC (2012), were paramount throughout the process of gaining approval, and implementation, once granted.

During this SGI's inquiry, the principals of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2012), and the Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007), were both utilized to enhance the data quality of the fieldwork findings: via verifying discoveries, seeking out contradictions and probing interstices, such as the lack of first-hand participant experience with the criminal abuses of SGI's in the Stage 1 and 3 fieldworks. The purpose was the enrichment of the verisimilitude of any results and their significance for the study's aims. Also, elements of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), were grafted into the fieldworks; as evidenced by the discovery of the elevated hazards that gay and bisexual men face in their use of SGI's. Alongside this groups heightened pleasure and sexual stimulation from trading sexualised selfies on the hooking-up apps, comes the greater risk of contracting STI's, HIV or being the victim of sexual assaults.

The many advantages and limitations of each of the three stages of fieldwork, were discussed in chapter five, apropos for achieving the study's objectives. Each selected method was not a perfect tool for achieving these aspirations, but on balance, the quantitative online survey, and two separate sets of semi-structured interviews that followed-on, were adjudged to be the best available for achieving the study's SGI's aims, in accordance with its pragmatic worldview methodological strategy.

Aims of the study

Differential engagement rates with SGI's

One aim of this study was ascertaining the extent of SGI use, among a large online sample, and of those, what proportion were passive consumers, rather than active creators of amateur images. Stage 1 discovered that 53% (317/603) of participants had seen SGI's in the last six months and that of these, 26.5% (84/317) had created their own image/s and posted them online. However, all the findings from Stage 1 need to be considered as findings from a convenience sample.

Gay and bisexual men were found to be far more prolific users of SGI's, than other groups, as were males, and the younger age categories. For gay/bi men, it was found that of 288 active online SGI users, 12.3% of heterosexuals, 31.4% of bisexuals, and 34.4% of homosexuals had created and shared SGI's, in the last six months. For males, it was 30.2%, and females 18.3% respectively, from 307 active SGI users.

The findings suggest that SGI users employed their materials for: sexual stimulation 91.9%, masturbation 86.1%, curiosity 65.3%, with a sexual partner 37%, humour 28.2%, for education 24.5%, and hooking-up for sex at 21.7%. One of the key findings of this thesis has been the demise of the 'lonely wanker' trope; although masturbation was high on the list of uses, finding out more about sex, learning about sex, having a laugh and arranging sexual encounters, particularly for gay and bisexual men, were all important too, as was the 37% who used SGI's to enhance pleasure with their sexual partners. These findings corroborate to some degree liberation theory for minority groups, as part of the NSM (Buechler, 1995; Pichardo, 1997) analysis. Previously isolated individuals can now connect to others through the online mechanism of swapping SGI's, a truism for those identity groups involving disability, LGBT's and sexual-fetish minorities, like BDSM fans.

Amateur Pornography: Just another adult leisure pastime?

Online pornography/SGI's have thrust themselves into the array of recreational pastimes pursued by millions of westerners; the caveat being that, what is safely enjoyed by many adults, during their non-work recreation (Wilson, 1980), has dangerous potentialities through their criminal abuse, for a minority and for many children. However, the same is undoubtedly true of many other legal leisure pastimes, like drinking alcohol, where 82% of UK adults, had an alcoholic beverage in the year before 2014 (Drinkaware, 2016). However, harmful levels of imbibing were at 3.8%; or gambling, where 45% of adults had gambled in the previous four weeks, but only 0.5% were in the 'problem' category (Gambling Commission, 2016). Such low problem rates can be matched against the findings that emerged in this inquiry, where only 2.9% of 311 active SGI users reported an overall negative experience, and against the lack of personal encounters with any negativity or criminal abuse of SGI's, among the survey and Stage 3 respondents.

SGI's & online platforms

The study did uncover which platforms a large group of SGI users had viewed their material on. The PornTube sites were way-out ahead here, with 87.8%, almost double the next category, blogs and erotic fiction on 44.1%, then webcam link-ups at 34.2%, and hooking-up sites with 31.8%, SNS's on 29.8%, the messaging app WhatsApp with 25.2% and image sharing app Snapchat, on 20.9%. The predominance of the PornTube sites corroborates the ascent of the free-porn commercial online model, at the expense of the DVD retailers and renters, but also the protean nature of the SGI 'pornvolution'; where most online pornography aficionados passively consume, SGI's made by others, but only in a minority of cases upload materials they have self-produced for others to view or purchase.

The one-third of SGI users who were seeing materials on webcam link-ups, underscores the dangers for children of this activity. This finding reinforced the research of the IWF (2015), who found that webcams were the largest source of SGI's/IloC's, with 85.9% of the 3,803 images that they uncovered.

The results for SGI's on SNS's, WhatsApp and Snapchat, ranging from the high to low twenties, are all indications of how pornography has invaded and occupied these platforms. This state of affairs, for many online adults, constitutes a source of pleasure and entertainment, as one of the Stage 3 participants (Oliver), elucidated how his football WhatsApp group regularly featured shared pornographic posts, often for jocular purposes. On the contrary, for victims of sextortion, like Canadian teenager Amanda Todd, or Scottish teenager Daniel Perry, it can lead to cyber-bullying/trolling and ultimately suicide. There have been four suicides of young men, attributed to webcam based sextortion attempts involving SGI's on SNS's, in the past twelve months in the UK (Topping, 2016).

The hooking-up sites 31.8% rate of SGI use, is gravid with many significant meanings for this study's research objectives. Firstly, it is gay/bisexual men who are more heavily involved in this mode of SGI use, compared to heterosexuals. Secondly, hooking-up apps are not about the passive consumption of SGI's, but involve active trading of sexual selfies as a vital part of the new cybermating-ritual, for NSA sex. Gay interviewees Jack and Harry, both described such activities as becoming the new norm for users of apps like 'Hornet, FitLads' and 'Gaydar' etc. Consequently, gay/bisexual men have experienced a sexual revolution, triggered partly by the smartphone and Wi-Fi connectivity of mobile online devices. Concomitant with this sexual liberation has been a rise in STI/HIV infections, the increased dangers for LGBT children who use these apps and the exacerbated risks of sexual assaults, rape and murder when meeting-up with sexual liaisons. The conviction of two gay murderers in late 2016 in England and Wales, is adduced to support this finding, both of whom used gay hooking-ups to arrange their lethal encounters.

A six-point typology of SGI's

A further key finding of this study was that there were six important types of SGI's, although others minor types exist and some in this taxonomy have a cross-over status. The online criminal abuse of SGI's could incorporate any of the other five: e.g., a child on a webcam performing an indecent sexual act; a predatory paedophile harvesting sexualized short movie clips from a minor's SNS's or messaging/image sharing app; or, the use of fake IDs/avatars on gay hooking-up apps, to arrange NSA sex and then administer doses of noxious substances as a prelude to murder with malice aforethought, as in the case of convicted gay killers, Stephen Port and Stefano Brizzi (Davies, 2016; Topping, 2016). Additionally, a vengeful ex-partner posting a sexual selfie on a revenge porn website; and finally, an adult getting cyber-stalked/trolled after they have been personally identified from an upload on one of the PornTube websites or revenge porn websites.

Impacts of SGI's on individuals

An aim of the study was to determine the impacts of SGI's on both users' and society. The findings for individuals indicate that for most adults, when used cautiously and responsibly, SGI's represent another avenue for the pursuit of pleasure and recreation. Three-quarters of the surveys active SGI users, passively and predominantly safely, consumed amateur material created by others. The real menaces of SGI's are focussed on the one-quarter who create and share such images online. Once 'out there' on the internet, an SGI can potentially have disastrous personal consequences, ranging from personal embarrassment, all the way to the other extremity of the victim's death, by suicide or murder.

For children, the potential threat posed by SGI's through online child grooming or CSA, must be factored into the overall impact equation. The police have 50,000 suspects, who are currently viewing, sharing and creating IloC's (Ramesh, 2014); although some shocking recent German research has led to estimates that 500,000 UK adult males may be committing this offence (Jütte, 2016). The five SOECA officers

imparted numerous case studies of the criminal exploitation of children by online offenders during their interviews. Likewise, they related concerns about the proliferation of SGI's on SNS's and messaging/image apps, an accelerating problem strongly linked to the explosive growth of UK smartphone possession. Controversially though, the fact cannot be avoided that some children are using online pornography/SGI's to satisfy their curiosity about sex, learn more about it, or obtain sexual stimulation and masturbatory pleasure out of them, as evidenced by Martellozzo et al's (2016), research into children's use of adult legal online pornography, despite the high negative initial responses upon their first exposure. The potential individual benefits of SGI's for under-eighteens is a hugely contested subject, surrounded by all the many dangers and hazards for children of CSA, online grooming, and the many cunning attempts by predatory internet paedophile offenders to acquire IIOC's/SGI's by nefarious means.

Impacts of SGI's on society

The question of SGI's impact on society, rather than individuals, can only be legitimately discussed when the ideological preconceptions of commentators are acknowledged. Lining-up in opposition are: anti-porn feminists, like Dworkin/Mackinnon (1989/1989), and earlier second wave feminists, like Friedan (1963), where all pornography is a tool for the exploitation and subjugation of women, intrinsically misogynist and filled with sexual violence against women. For Marx and Engels (2016), all work which is not fully recompensed is exploitative, including therefore SGI creation. However, a more nuanced later Marxist analysis shifts the focus away from naked economic exploitation, towards instead the process of 'subsumption', whereby the dominant economic system appropriates to itself all aspects of human experience, including sexuality, pleasure and libido (Caffentzis, 2005).

Fundamentalist evangelical Christians, particularly in the US, conceptualise all pornography, including SGI's, as addictive and a contrivance of Satan for the moral corruption of ordinary citizens. The US neo-conservatives, and some UK New Right/market liberals, are political ideologues whose philosophy is best represented by the maxim 'God, country and family'. For these, the perceived undermining of the nuclear family by online pornography, goes hand in hand with beliefs about how over-generous state welfare breeds social ills such as welfare dependency, family breakdown and the creation of an underclass etc. (Murray, 1996; Marsland, 1996). Among this orchestra of oppositional tactics to online pornography/SGI's are: banning, blocking, censoring, and at the very least, enhanced age-verification tactics. Although, the introduction of enhanced age-verification measures, is also a favoured solution advocated by many commentators in the child protection sector too.

In the opposing ideological camp, are an alliance comprised of: free speech advocates, maintaining that pornography is a matter of individual liberty and free speech; cultural studies theorists, and members of various liberation NSM's, such as LGBT's, ethnic minorities, disability-rights, anti-capitalist protesters, anti-nuclear groups, eco-protesters, pro-sex-workers' rights, and libertarian/anarchist defenders of net-neutrality, etc. Supporters of Mill's (1859) ideas believe that the ability to access and create online pornography/SGI's is a fundamental human liberty, embodied in the maxim that the state has no legitimate role to dictate what adult consenting citizens get up to in private (Bull, 2008). Such liberty is seen to come in lock-step with greater legal equality, banning hate crimes and eradicating discrimination at work etc. The chief proponent of this approach is perhaps Brian McNair (2013), whose analysis of online pornography has equated citizen-porn in western societies with a host of beneficent social, political, legal, economic and cultural/identity advances for women and other minorities. This contrast starkly with the Islamic theocratic states, like Iran or the former Taliban controlled Afghanistan, both of which outlawed pornography, and where human rights abuses routinely included: gay men hung from lamp posts;

‘adulterous’ women brutally stoned to death in public executions; and political/religious opponents tortured and murdered (Delman, 2015; Rupar, 2014).

A parallel theory to that of Mill’s, is that of the various liberation theorists; LGBT, disability, gender, ethnic minorities and minority sexual-fetish fans, can all be perceived as embracing SGI’s as part of their campaigns to win greater legal, social, political and economic rights. As NSM’s, their advocacy of online pornography/SGI’s are one means, among many, for these groups, coalescing around ‘identity’ politics, to campaign for an array of multiple liberations (Buechler, 1995; Pichardo, 1997).

Two theoreticians from the 1930’s offered a prophetic, lucid, and perspicacious perspective, when applied to the future social role of SGI’s. Firstly, Joseph Schumpeter’s (2009) conceptions about the forces of creative destruction within capitalism, furnished a clairvoyant prophecy of recent upheavals within the commercial pornography business, where free-porn/SGI’s are in the process of rapidly displacing both adult-entertainment film studios and DVD retail/renters. For Schumpeter, these mature industries (old pornography), are being smashed and supplanted by the newly emergent, more efficient and, crucially for a Marxist economist, more profitable SGI/free-porn alternative. This part of Schumpeter’s vision has the feel of inspired lucidity, unlike sadly, the second part of his conceptualisation, the imminent doom of capitalism, now severely overdue from the mid-twentieth century.

A second theorist, from the opposite-end of the political spectrum, with a high degree of import for the findings of this SGI inquiry, is the Functionalist Kingsley Davis (1937); his inspired but controversial nostrums on the social uses of prostitution, survive their application to online pornography/SGI’s, in rude health. For, without easy access to SGI’s/online pornography, where would the sexually frustrated in society get their libidinous needs satiated? Likewise, how would the sex-workers they make a contract with, earn a commensurate honest income without these payments? Already, one-in-ten men in the UK (Morris, 2008), are estimated to have paid for sex at least once, and that is alongside online pornography/SGI’s easy availability. Using

the Davis (1937) approach, SGI's/online pornography can be perceived as suppressing the numbers of female acquisitive petty thieves, who can instead turn-tricks for cash, instead of shop-lifting, burgling, selling-drugs, or carrying-out various street-crimes in their quests for money. Also, just as in the 1930's, how many marriages may be saved, because husbands can assuage their carnal needs with the viable alternative of online pornography/SGI's, now replacing the prostitutes of Davis's era? Although, for balance, how many marriages are wrecked too, by philandering partners using online SGI's, and 'virtual infidelity' potentially becomes more prevalent among cited grounds for divorce?

Do SGI's fulfil a pedagogical function, for some?

On the thorny question of whether SGI's can provide any kind of pedagogical function for both adult and child viewers, the findings of this research show that for a significant minority, they do. In the survey, some 24.5% (67/273), of the active SGI users stated that they used the material for educational reasons. Given that 49.8% (151/307) of active SGI users had first seen one of the images when under the age of eighteen, then it fair to surmise that some children are using SGI's for the purposes of learning about sex, although far less than for masturbation purposes. The quality, realism and relevance of what these children learn is however, an open-question, especially as amateur images were created for sexual stimulation purposes, and not educational ones.

PSHE: 'We don't need no education'?

An important key finding of this inquiry has been the government's failure to reboot PSHE/SRE in the school curriculum, to ameliorate the online criminal abuse of SGI's, and to augment children's digital privacy, and internet health, safety and security. This is unquestionably a national scandal, for not only did OFSTED (2013), find that 40% of inspected PSHE sessions were unsatisfactory, but the government was also

condemned for its 'weak' approach to the topic, by the Education Select Committee (Riley-Smith, 2015). Additionally, increasingly large numbers of UK schools are not even obliged to offer PSHE/SRE at all, as it is not compulsory in primary schools. Moreover, all fee-paying schools, the growing state 'Academy' sector, and the new 'Free Schools', are not compelled to follow the National Curriculum which stipulates that PSHE/SRE is a subject that must be provided as part of science, for every secondary child (Gov.uk, 2016). School provision of PSHE/SRE is even more enfeebled by the fact that parents can also withdraw their offspring from parts of the mandatory programme.

Realcore SGI's or commercial pornography?

Another key finding of the study is that SGI's are more authentic about sex, as they are performed and recorded like *cinema-vérité*, by real people. Viewers seeking to raise their sexual literacy may learn more from SGI's verisimilitude, rather than from studio produced fakery, with its 'plastic' actors. The Realcore nature of amateur pornography (Messina, 2010), contrasts favourably with the commercial product, which is likely to contain more of the rough sex, bad language, and the misogynist scenes so excoriated by the second wave feminists (Friedan, 1963; Morgan, 2014).

Originality of the findings of this study

The findings of this thesis can be asserted to be highly original, in the sense of the pursuit of new knowledge about an under-researched area, in the composition of a PhD thesis at level 8. Stage 1 of the fieldwork produced an impressive amount of quantitative data, about the metrics of use of SGI's among a large sample of online participants, while Stage 3 followed this up by ascertaining the qualitative experiences of five active users of the images. Stage 2 explored the plethora of jeopardies that SGI's represent, especially for children, via the vocational expertise of serving MPS officers in the SOECA unit. This was a unique opportunity to explore ethnographically their

professional proficiency in combating online CSA, grooming and the production of IIOC's. Their expertise transpired to be a vital counterbalance to the overall picture of SGI's gained from the other two elements of the fieldworks, where most participants possessed an acute awareness of the conceivable hazards of SGI's to children and some adults, but who had no significant subjective experiences of the negative impacts of SGI's, including their criminal abuses.

Limitations of the research

The methodology chapter (five), of this thesis examined the limitations that the inquiry faced. Always cognizant of these, many choices were made in the spirit of the pragmatic worldview adopted in the inquiry's pursuit of a mixed methods strategy (Creswell, 2009). However, the theoretical and practical methodological selections were chosen for being the most apt, efficient, productive and logical, of those available to uncover the aims of the investigation into SGI's. Certainly, many methodological techniques were not perfect, but represented instead the best obtainable tool, from those available. Taking a reflexive and self-critical approach to the overall research strategy, and methods selected, allowed the inquiry to be undertaken with the most efficacious results in the circumstances that existed, and always with an awareness of any degradation to the overall data quality of any findings in the light of acknowledged weaknesses.

The dawn of SGI's can legitimately be fixed on two dates: firstly, 2007, when Apple launched the original iPhone (Mather, 2007). The modern smartphone was born with its mobile Wi-Fi connectivity, user-friendly internet interface, and the on-board high quality digital camera for taking still and video images. Sexualised selfies, and short, amateur pornographic self-made movie-clips, were in consequence unshackled from broadband connected domestic desktop PC's and laptops. However, the first iPhone was a premier device, and confined to affluent westerners. Google created the Android OS mobile interface in 2008 (Android Central, 2016), and allowed it to be

freely licensed and installed on a range of cheap smartphones from multiple manufacturers. The demotic ability to make their own citizen-porn, for millions of ordinary people, was initiated by this event. The Android breakout happened in our second significant date for SGI's, 2010; although the market penetration of smartphones took a few years further to reach full-fruit, and it has now reached 80% of the UK's 12-15yo's (ofcom, 2016). Given these facts, then the entirety of this inquiries three-stage primary research findings, comprising a four-year, full-time PhD project, concerning the impacts of SGI's, could not be anything but intensely original. The accelerated rise of internet connected smartphones are simply too recent to have been studied with any depth, as this device looks set to displace the laptop webcam as the source of most future SGI's.

Recommendations for further research into SGI's

This SGI inquiry offers a range of areas and questions that need more detailed examination and study by academics:

- The Conservative government are about to introduce more rigorous censorship, blocking and age-verification measures for UK based commercial pornography websites, many containing SGI uploads (Travis, 2016). However, it is the finding of this investigation that many children will be able to bypass such restrictions using TOR, Virtual Private Networks (VPN's), or 'proxy' websites, to access what they seek online. In the past, getting around such barriers may have been more problematical, but now many children will be easily able to use them to circumvent the new restrictions.

Furthermore, they will only apply to UK based online pornography websites, so children could just visit the cornucopia of foreign domiciled sites to access this material instead.

Academic research into this area is desperately needed before the Conservative Governments' Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, implements this move. However, if it is introduced prematurely, then an investigation into its effectiveness is called for.

- How extensive are the dangers to gay/bisexual men in the use of SGI's on hooking-up apps and at chem-sex parties? Just how many men are participating in potentially extremely risky behaviours involving SGI's, and what is to be done to lessen the hazards for participants? All important questions that need answering, perhaps by a more ethnographic based research project, embedded among the LGBT community.
- The use of fake ID's and avatars provides a recurrent theme for this work. Many derive pleasure and fun from recasting their online 'self'. However, they are simultaneously an effective mechanism in the perpetration of online criminal activities involving SGI's, such as: sextortion, blackmail, revenge porn, cyber-trolling/bullying, cyber-stalking and romance fraud etc. The topic demands further study, to both explore the issue more deeply, and to promote greater awareness of the dangers posed. Enhancing peoples' digital health and safety awareness about fake ID's and avatars might have saved the lives of Amanda Todd, Daniel Perry, and the four young male murder victims of gay serial killer Stephen Port; one of whom, coincidentally, was a fashion student at Middlesex University.
- The findings of this study revealed that a significant minority of online users had used SGI's for educational and curiosity purposes. While most just want to achieve sexual stimulation, is it time to encourage the production of more 'instructional' or 'ethical' pornography/SGI's? This would be enjoyable, informative and more authentic for users, and not imbued with the sexual violence, bad language, unrepresentativeness or misogynist tropes that often runs like a leitmotif throughout the products of commercial adult-entertainment. Research into the possible differences between ethical/instructional online SGI's/pornography, and that produced merely for sexual stimulation and masturbation would be a great boon. The impact of Realcore SGI's on young people's attitudes and views, in contrast with

commercial pornography, would also be a worthy research endeavour. Could authentic, amateur pornography be a force for good, to replace the misogyny, sexual violence and bad language of its commercial rival?

- The realities behind 'virtual infidelity' with online SGI's, and their impact on married or cohabiting couples, would be an intriguing subject for a future PhD student to investigate. Are SGI's the saviour of marriage, or alternatively, its grave-digger? A more empirical exploration into the application of Davis' (1937) conceptions on prostitution to SGI's, are needed.
- The nature of paedophilia itself in relation to SGI's, is a topic worthy of research. Currently, the aetiology of CSA is largely held to be within the 'Cycle of Abuse' laid out by Finkelhor (1984). However, if paedophilia is merely an alternative form of sexuality, albeit an illegal and morally repulsive one, hard-wired into certain individuals' brains, then the whole field of child protection, safeguarding and the way the problem of CSA/IloC's are dealt with, face crucial questions about their methods and responses.

SGI's are likely to feature heavily in online CSA, as self-taken IloC's, therefore a possible switch to a more public health centred approach to non-contact child sex offenders, has a high degree of relevance.

CSA as a childhood 'learned' pathology, or alternatively, a 'choice' for those with a DNA imposed sexuality, would be a fascinating area for future research. Such a study would need to be multi-disciplinary, encompassing psychology, criminology and neuro-science. It would also be explosively controversial.

- Leading on from the previous point, research into the 'virtuous paedophile' concept would help to ascertain whether some can be helped and supported to stop offending with SGI's/IloC's. Furthermore, the provocative idea pioneered in Germany, that UK therapists and counsellors should not be legally obligated to report any suspected case of safeguarding issues, involving a potential child victim, could be further explored. The hypothesis that paedophiles remain hidden and undetected,

without the necessary support not to offend, because they are too afraid of being reported to the police by their therapists, needs scrutiny.

- One little known area of SGI's that warrants further investigation is that of voyeurs who secretly film people with their smartphones, in toilets, or through peep-holes etc., then collect, and sometimes share these non-consensual abusive images online. Furtive still SGI's, of people in various stages of undress in gym changing rooms, are out-there in cyber space and being shared on SNS newsfeeds.

The most serious examples of criminal voyeurism with SGI/IIOC's involve teachers who secretly record images of the children at their schools, while they are going to the toilet or using the showers. Criminal voyeurism entails deriving sexual gratification from *'filming people doing a private act without their consent'* (ITVNews, 2014). Cardiff deputy headmaster Gareth Williams, aged 47, was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment in 2014 for possessing 647 voyeuristic IIOC's, that he had secretly taken of boys at his school, including in the toilets, alongside 16,246 IIOC's obtained from the internet, and other CSA offences (Ibid). This is just one example of a number cases that have appeared in the media in the last few years.

An inquiry into extent of this issue, its causes, the impact on victims (if they are even aware of it), and how those responsible should be treated, would provide an excellent case study of one very specialised, but largely under-researched 'dark-corner' of the criminal abuse of online SGI's.

Social Policy recommendations relating to SGI's

- PSHE/SRE must be made more universal, relevant and effective in equipping children with knowledge about the issues surrounding online pornography/SGI's. There is an urgent need to augment children's general online health, safety and digital security/privacy awareness and skills. Conservative Education Secretary, Justine Greening, has just announced a plan to make PSHE a compulsory part of the school National Curriculum. Although, whether the measure gets implemented, and the

quality and extent of future teaching about online SGI's/pornography, remains unknown. It will apply to all types of schools, including primary, and claims to be updating PSHE for the digital age, with content on cyber-bullying, sexting and online safety. The measures are planned to become statutory requirements by September 2019 (Mills, 2017).

- PSHE/SRE in schools should be provided by external experts, invited in by educational institutions to deliver professionally prepared and administered sessions on sex, relationships and online safety issues, including the topics of SGI's and online pornography. This would overcome the twin hindrances of, the reluctance of teachers to deliver this vitally important educational component of formal education, and children's embarrassment about dealing with the subject in front of their everyday tutors.
- A trial needs to be undertaken by the police, into the public health strategy towards dealing with non-contact offenders of IIoC's. Would this allow them to focus their limited resources upon catching proven online contact CSA perpetrators? This would leave many non-contact sex offenders who 'only' download/upload IIoC's on P2P and Torrent sites, to a more health-based preventative approach, based on the German 'Project Dunkelfeld/Don't Offend' models.
- A further trial, involving the use of existing SGI's/IIoC's possessed by the police in their inquiries, needs to be undertaken. Currently, officers such as those at SOECA are crippled in their criminal investigations by the fact that they cannot send images that are already on the CAID. When engaging with online CSA offenders, and those trading IIoC's/SGI's as part of their child-grooming, sextortion and blackmail activities, the detectives' effectiveness is enfeebled by the existing situation, whereby they can only send typed text, and not images, including IIoC's/SGI's. In consequence, they are conducting their vital investigations with one-hand tied behind their backs. Such an experimental trial would undoubtedly produce howls of outrage, and has serious legal and ethical implications. But, it is far too important an issue to ignore any longer.

- The law on child-sexsters needs to be amended immediately. Most children who do this are technically committing a criminal offence, that of making and distributing an IIoC, either of themselves, or of a youthful relationship partner or friend/contact. Most of these children do not need criminalising, but must be treated with compassion and understanding, and given suitable advice and help about their future online health, safety and security. The decision to prosecute child-sexsters should not be left to the discretion of the CPS or local senior police officers, on a case by case basis. Only in the minority of cases, where malicious intent is proven, should the criminal law be applied to juvenile image sexters.

- Adults need to be endowed with greater awareness of the hazards surrounding incautious sending of SGI's to their sexual partners or online contacts, or publishing them on their SNS/messaging and image apps. A major public health, multi-media publicity campaign, augmenting such digital literacy and online safety skills, would be needed for this; as would enlisting the ISP's, and the titanic global internet corporations like GAFA etc.

This is a crucial social policy initiative, given the lack of parity of esteem between police investigating online CSA involving IIoC's/SGI's, and adult victims of criminal abuse like sextortion, cyber-bullying and revenge porn etc., due to the police's diminishing resourcing/personnel issues.

- The SNS's, image apps, and messaging apps must be coerced to spend more of their gargantuan global profits on ensuring that IIoC's, and online offenders, intent upon child grooming or sextortion and blackmail etc., are more effectively internally policed on their platforms. Reliance on algorithms and word-searches, or self-reporting of abuse, are no longer acceptable ripostes to child-safety issues involving SGI's, with the flood of pornography that has been proven to have subsumed these platforms, by this inquiry.

One place for them to start would be enforcing their own rules on the minimum age at which a person can open an online account. Currently, this is thirteen for both Facebook and Twitter, yet millions of children have accounts, and so find themselves

exposed to the hazards of victimhood with online predatory paedophiles intent upon CSA, grooming or obtaining IloC's, in the form of SGI's.

If the UK government wants to introduce a truly effective 'age-verification' measure to robustly protect children online from CSA and IloC's/SGI's, enforcing the minimum age of thirteen on SNS's/message & image apps, would be an effective place to start; rather than tackling the current *bête noire*, of weak age-verification procedures for access to domestic pornography websites. For, as a recent Comres poll of 1,200 UK children aged 10-18 revealed, 78% of the 10-12yo's admitted to having at least one account on them, a figure that expanded to 96% for the 13-18yo's (Coughlan, 2016).

Concluding thoughts...

If there is one over-arching theme which runs throughout this investigation's findings into the impact of SGI's on individuals and society, it is the dichotomous nature of amateur produced pornographic images. This applies to almost every theme, context, scenario, theory or use, to which they are put and the consequences they have.

In this work, numerous words have been used to express this state: bifurcation, duality, diptych, symbiosis, binary and even dialectical. They are all variations on the same theme, that SGI's simultaneously occupy a twin existence.

For most adult online users of SGI's who view and download the productions of others, a great deal of safe pleasure entails, yet a minority, around a quarter of the survey sample, create their own images. Again, a great deal of sexual stimulation and joy can result, but those same images can be abused by online criminals, and devastating misery be inflicted upon the victims.

Finally, it is the conclusion of this research that the pleasure/pain bifurcation of SGI's is very real. Nevertheless, the two aspects are not evenly balanced. In almost every instant, the qualification, 'for the majority', or 'for most' was appended to the positive aspects of SGI use: pleasure, dates, sexual stimulation and gratification, excitement,

sexual release, fun and desire are all amply evident with SGI's. People use them precisely because they are so pleasurable, joyful, fun, recreationally fulfilling and alluring.

The minority of adults who experience negative feelings, or who become the targets of online abuse and criminal manipulation because of their SGI creations, are the victims of serious crimes. We need to ensure that the perpetrators are suitably punished, and all adults are made aware of the risks and hazards involved in sending a sexualised selfie, and the precautions that they need to take to minimise their exposure to potential danger.

Children obviously are a separate issue, and robust measures need to be in place to protect them from the possible dangers of an adult pastime, just like them being barred from buying cigarettes or alcohol, until they reach adulthood. Nonetheless, just as children will always manage to get hold of cigarettes and alcohol, so they will find a way to access online pornography too, including SGI's. For all children, the effective use of PSHE/SRE in schools, may be the only valuable way to promote their online health, safety and security awareness, around the subject of SGI's.

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Appendix 1

Ethical Approval Forms for all three fieldwork stages

**Middlesex University School Health and Social Sciences
Social Sciences Academic Group**

Application for research ethics approval (Stage 1)

The purpose of this form is to help staff and students in the Social Sciences Academic Group in their pursuit of ethical research methodologies and procedures.

Please complete the form giving as much detail as possible. If a question is not applicable, please indicate by marking N/A. Students should discuss and complete the form with their supervisors.

For Taught Masters students, ethics applications are usually dealt with at programme level, though referral to the Social Sciences Academic Group Ethics Subcommittee is a possibility if complex or contentious ethics issues arise.

You must submit with this application:

- a) A summary of the methodology to be used in the research*
- b) Draft of any interview schedule or questionnaire you propose to use or outline of the topics to be covered*
- c) Any information sheets and/or consent forms for participants.*

1. Personal details

- a) Name of student: Andrew Monaghan*
- b) Address: Flat G, Grasby House, 5 Fitzjohn Av., Barnet, Herts, EN5 2HE*
- c) Phone Number: 0208440XXX*
- d) Email address: andrew87@mdx.ac.uk*

2. Programme details:

- a) Name of programme: MPhil/PhD.*
- b) Year of study: 2013-16*
- c) Mode of study: Full-time/Part-time*
- d) Name(s) of supervisor(s): Prof. V. Ruggiero & Dr. E Martellozzo*

3. Details of proposed study:

a) Title of study: **“Exploring how Self-Generated Internet Pornography is used among online users, and reviewing the conflicting theoretical and empirical evidence for the harm that the material may cause to those involved, and for society.”**

b) Please give a brief description of the nature of the study (50-100 words), including details of data collection procedures:

This will be an investigation into two aspects of Self-Generated Internet Porn (SGIP) in modern society. Firstly, a range of existing Theories (Sociological, Political and Cultural) will be applied to the topic of SGIP both through a literature search, and via the Mixed Research Method approach of Primary Research. Other ‘new’ theories may well emerge from this process. Secondly, an Empirical investigation will be conducted into the following areas: extent of SGIP’s use, how it is used, new technologies and software applications which have allowed SGIP to flourish, and the harm or good that use and exposure may cause to users, producers and distributors.

An initial, anonymous online survey, conducted via Survey Monkey will be carried out to gain some quantum data and establish some correlations. Volunteers will be asked for after the survey, to take part in Qualitative In-Depth interviews. Around 10 of these are envisaged. A second, updated Ethical Approval Form will be submitted, before the second phase of the research, the Interviews, commences. This will lay out the interview schedule and topics for discussion, as well as addressing ethical issues of relevance to that second phase of the research.

c) Will primary data be collected?

Yes/No

If NO, please go to Section 7 of this form

4. Details of the participants in the study:

a) From what population, will your participants be drawn? Any over 18’s who choose to participate voluntarily in the Web Survey

b) How many participants will be involved in your study? Please provide an estimate.
300+ (depends on response) for the survey, then 10 from these for the follow-up interviews.

c) Are children aged 18 or under to be involved?

Yes/No

If yes, what ages will your participants be?

Please note: If you are conducting research with children (under the age of 18) or vulnerable adults you must undergo a police check. This takes 6 or more weeks.

5. Access and consent:

- a) *Briefly describe how access will be gained to the participants.*
- A Convenience / Snowball sample will be drawn from people whose email addresses I know, interested parties and organizations etc. Overall, my personal email contact list is quite small – around 40 persons, so this should produce only a small number of the total anticipated responses to the Survey. The great majority of these contacts already know that I am doing the MPhil / PhD at MDX and should be sympathetic to the request to participate anonymously in the online questionnaire, especially as I will emphasize that a broad range of both users and non-users of SGIP are being sought. As actually participating in the research is private, confidential and anonymous none of them should feel pressured or embarrassed by the invitation, as I have no way of knowing who did, or did not, respond by taking part in the survey. Some of these contacts know the general topic of the research, but not the specific area under inquiry. However, this will become apparent to them from the Information sheet that needs to be read before commencing the questionnaire. I will not be asking those I email to send me their contacts, but may ask them to forward on the 'Hotlink' to any over 18's they think are suitable.*
- A 'Hotlink', and invite / explanation of the research will be posted around various Social Networking Sites (SNS's) and Web Bulletin Boards, to recruit potential respondents who are over the age of 18. Before any postings are made on such sites, the permission of their Forum / Website Administrators (Gatekeepers) will be asked for, and obtained beforehand. As no-one knows who is, or is not, using Internet Porn in general, and SGIP several different types of Forum or SNS sites for adults would all be pertinent to seek participants for the Survey (with the Gatekeepers permission). Examples could include Football Fan Forums (Like NFFC on Facebook), TV show fan Forums (such as Game of Thrones), Campaigning organizations and Charities with a social context (such as Liberty or The Joseph Rowntree Foundation), Sporting and Leisure pastimes – such as or computer games communities. Many Forums for Internet Porn aficionados exist, such as: Helix studios, or Kink.com, geekgirlsonline.com, evaangelina.com, gooddykeporn.com, suicidegirls.com, suicidegirls.com, Literotica.com, Glimpsesofdave etc. Clearly, reaching respondents with experience of SGIP should not be a problem. Obviously, Gatekeepers prior permission will need to be obtained. Although it is possible that under 18's might gain access to the web-survey, and lie about their age status, this risk has been countered as robustly as possible in the circumstances.*

From this survey, 10 In-Depth interviews will take place with respondents who have volunteered their contact details at the end of the initial Survey. Before volunteers are asked to input their contact details, they will be offered the opportunity to use a pseudonym, to boost their personal sense of their anonymity in the research. How many choose this option will remain an Iceberg like figure, until the research is implemented. However, as no actual physical meeting will take place between any of the interviewees and the researcher, all contact can take place with just a first name – whether real or a pseudonym. This will increase the confidence of all participants at this stage of the research.

When contacting these participants, a new and neutral email account, perhaps containing a name like 'mdxdoctoralresearch' will be used by the researcher. This will provide a necessary buffer between the researcher and the interviewees should anything unforeseen or unwelcome occur in terms of emails sent from the interviewees to the researcher. It is conceivable that this neutral email account might have to be disabled if things spiralled out of control with certain interviewees and their email correspondence.

The preceding precautions also apply to the use of Skype for correspondence with the interviewees. A new account, containing some form of the neutral 'mdxdoctoralresearch' identifier, will be used, rather than the personal account of the researcher.

The use of a separate email and Skype account are just part of the features to protect respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, but also the safety of the researcher when conducting the study. Therefore, no personal Telephone Numbers or accommodation Address will be made available to any respondents.

b) Will informed consent be sought from any gatekeepers? Yes/No

If so, what gatekeepers?

Administrators and Forum Managers permission will be asked for before any 'Hotlink' to the Survey is posted on their sites.

Will you obtain written consent from the gatekeepers? Yes/No:

Via electronic means

c) Will informed consent be obtained directly from all participants Yes/No

If yes, will you obtain written consent? Yes/No

Full Information will be provided to Respondents who will be given it before the Web Survey is started, by way of an Information Sheet that they must read and acknowledge before proceeding. An Informed Consent form will have to be signed, in advance, by those participating in the In-Depth interviews.

d) Will payment or an incentive be offered to participants? Yes/No

If yes, please state amount of payment or type of incentive

e) Length of session for an individual participant (if more than one session, please give number and nature of sessions and amount of time for each): 10 mins to fill in survey and up to 2 hrs. For the In-Depth interviews.

f) *In what locations, will data gathering take place? Volunteers will use Mobile phones, Tablet Computers and PC's to access the Internet for the survey, and via Skype Live Video conferencing for the interviews.*

g) *Will you inform your participants of their right to withdraw from the research? (They can stop at any point)* Yes/No

h) *Will you guarantee confidentiality of information to your participants? (No personal details will be taken on the Web Survey – Confidentiality will be guaranteed for those participating in the In-Depth Interviews)* Yes/No

i) *Will you guarantee anonymity to your participants? (No personal details will be taken on the Web Survey – Anonymity will be guaranteed for those participating in the In-Depth Interviews)* Yes/No

6. Safety and legal issues

a) *Will you be alone with a participant?* Yes/No

b) *Will you be alone with a group of participants?* Yes/No

b) *What safety issues does your methodology raise for you and for your participants? Participants may feel uncomfortable with some of the topics raised, but they will be appraised of this before the Survey starts, otherwise none.*

c) *What legal issues does your methodology raise for you and for your participants? It is possible a small minority of the In-Depth interviewees may admit to some criminal activity in their responses, such as child abuse or involvement with Indecent Images of Children. If this occurs, the police may have to be informed, overriding any guarantee of anonymity / confidentiality given to respondents.*

7. Codes of ethics

a) *Have you read and understood at least one of the following:* Yes

The British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice? (available at www.britisoc.org.uk)

The Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology by the British Society of Criminology? (available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/bsc/council/CODEETH.HTM>)

The Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines (available at: <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethics.htm>)

Another set of ethics guidelines appropriate to your research topic (Please specify)

b) *Are there any ethical issues which concern you about this piece of research? If yes, please specify:* Yes/No

I believe the information given above to be true. The methodology outlined above will be the methodology used in my research. I will notify my supervisor of any proposed changes to this methodology.

Signature of Investigator: Andrew Monaghan

Date: 7/III/2014

Signature of Supervisor(s):

Date:

Please note: The application must be approved by ALL supervisors and ALL supervisors must sign the application form. Students being supervised across subject areas **MUST** obtain the agreement of BOTH supervisors.

Counter-signed by (member of programme team):

Name

Signature

Date

Passed by Social Sciences Academic Group Ethics Subcommittee

Names of two representatives:

Signatures:

Date:

Middlesex University School Health and Social Sciences

Social Sciences Academic Group

Application for research ethics approval (Stage 2)

The purpose of this form is to help staff and students in the Social Sciences Academic Group in their pursuit of ethical research methodologies and procedures.

Please complete the form giving as much detail as possible. If a question is not applicable, please indicate by marking N/A. Students should discuss and complete the form with their supervisors.

For Taught Masters students, ethics applications are usually dealt with at programme level, though referral to the Social Sciences Academic Group Ethics Subcommittee is a possibility if complex or contentious ethics issues arise.

You must submit with this application:

- a) A summary of the methodology to be used in the research*
- b) Draft of any interview schedule or questionnaire you propose to use or outline of the topics to be covered*
- c) Any information sheets and/or consent forms for participants.*

2. Personal details

- a) Name of student: Andrew Monaghan*
- b) Address: Flat G, Grasby House, 5 Fitzjohn Av., Barnet, Herts, EN5 2HE*
- c) Phone Number: 0208440XXXX*
- d) Email address: andrew87@mdx.ac.uk*

2. Programme details:

- a) Name of programme: MPhil/PhD.*
- b) Year of study: 2013-16*
- c) Mode of study: Full-time/Part-time*
- d) Name(s) of supervisor(s): Prof. V. Ruggiero & Dr. E Martellozzo*

4. Details of proposed study:

a) Title of study: **“Exploring how Self-Generated Internet Pornography is used among online users, and reviewing the conflicting theoretical and empirical evidence for the harm that the material may cause to those involved, and for society.”**

b) Please give a brief description of the nature of the study (50-100 words), including details of data collection procedures:

This will be an investigation into two aspects of Self-Generated Internet Porn (SGIP) in modern society. Firstly, a range of existing Theories (Sociological, Political and Cultural) will be applied to the topic of SGIP both through a literature search, and via the Mixed Research Method approach of Primary Research. Other ‘new’ theories may well emerge from this process. Secondly, an Empirical investigation will be conducted into the following areas: extent of SGIP’s use, how it is used, new technologies and software applications which have allowed SGIP to flourish, and the harm or good that use and exposure may cause to users, producers and distributors.

An initial, anonymous online survey, conducted via Survey Monkey will be carried out to gain some quantum data and establish some correlations. Volunteers will be asked for after the survey, to take part in Qualitative In-Depth interviews. Around 10 of these are envisaged. A second, updated Ethical Approval Form will be submitted, before the second phase of the research, the Interviews, commences. This will lay out the interview schedule and topics for discussion, as well as addressing ethical issues of relevance to that second phase of the research.

c) Will primary data be collected?

Yes/No

If NO, please go to Section 7 of this form

4. Details of the participants in the study:

a) From what population, will your participants be drawn? Any over 18’s who choose to participate voluntarily in the Web Survey

b) How many participants will be involved in your study? Please provide an estimate.
300+ (depends on response) for the survey, then 10 from these for the follow-up interviews.

c) Are children aged 18 or under to be involved?

Yes/No

If yes, what ages will your participants be?

Please note: If you are conducting research with children (under the age of 18) or vulnerable adults you must undergo a police check. This takes 6 or more weeks.

5. Access and consent:

d) *Briefly describe how access will be gained to the participants.*

A Convenience / Snowball sample will be drawn from people whose email addresses I know, interested parties and organizations etc. Overall, my personal email contact list is quite small – around 40 persons, so this should produce only a small number of the total anticipated responses to the Survey. The great majority of these contacts already know that I am doing the MPhil / PhD at MDX and should be sympathetic to the request to participate anonymously in the online questionnaire, especially as I will emphasize that a broad range of both users and non-users of SGIP are being sought. As actually participating in the research is private, confidential and anonymous none of them should feel pressured or embarrassed by the invitation, as I have no way of knowing who did, or did not, respond by taking part in the survey. Some of these contacts know the general topic of the research, but not the specific area under inquiry. However, this will become apparent to them from the Information sheet that needs to be read before commencing the questionnaire. I will not be asking those I email to send me their contacts, but may ask them to forward on the 'Hotlink' to any over 18's they think are suitable.

A 'Hotlink', and invite / explanation of the research will be posted around various Social Networking Sites (SNS's) and Web Bulletin Boards, to recruit potential respondents who are over the age of 18. Before any postings are made on such sites, the permission of their Forum / Website Administrators (Gatekeepers) will be asked for, and obtained beforehand. As no-one knows who is, or is not, using Internet Porn in general, and SGIP several different types of Forum or SNS sites for adults would all be pertinent to seek participants for the Survey (with the Gatekeepers permission). Examples could include Football Fan Forums (Like NFFC on Facebook), TV show fan Forums (such as Game of Thrones), Campaigning organizations and Charities with a social context (such as Liberty or The Joseph Rowntree Foundation), Sporting and Leisure pastimes – such as computer games communities. Many Forums for Internet Porn aficionados exist, such as: Helix studios, or Kink.com, geekgirlsonline.com, evaangelina.com, goodydykeporn.com, suicidegirls.com, suicidegirls.com, Literotica.com, Glimpsesofdave etc. Clearly, reaching respondents with experience of SGIP should not be a problem. Obviously, Gatekeepers prior permission will need to be obtained. Although it is possible that under 18's might gain access to the web-survey, and lie about their age status, this risk has been countered as robustly as possible in the circumstances.

From this survey, 10 In-Depth interviews will take place with respondents who have volunteered their contact details at the end of the initial Survey. Before volunteers are asked to input their contact details, they will be offered the opportunity to use a pseudonym, to boost their personal sense of their anonymity in the research. How many choose this option will remain an Iceberg like figure, until the research is implemented. However, as no actual physical meeting will take place between any of the interviewees and the researcher, all contact can take place with just a first name – whether real or a pseudonym. This will increase the confidence of all participants at this stage of the research.

When contacting these participants, a new and neutral email account, perhaps containing a name like 'mdxdoctoralresearch' will be used by the researcher. This will provide a necessary buffer between the researcher and the interviewees should

anything unforeseen or unwelcome occur in terms of emails sent from the interviewees to the researcher. It is conceivable that this neutral email account might have to be disabled if things spiralled out of control with certain interviewees and their email correspondence.

The preceding precautions also apply to the use of Skype for correspondence with the interviewees. A new account, containing some form of the neutral 'mdxdoctoralresearch' identifier, will be used, rather than the personal account of the researcher.

The use of a separate email and Skype account are just part of the features to protect respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, but also the safety of the researcher when conducting the study. Therefore, no personal Telephone Numbers or accommodation Address will be made available to any respondents.

b) Will informed consent be sought from any gatekeepers? **Yes/No**

If so, what gatekeepers?

Administrators and Forum Managers permission will be asked for before any 'Hotlink' to the Survey is posted on their sites.

Will you obtain written consent from the gatekeepers? **Yes/No:**
Via electronic means

c) Will informed consent be obtained directly from all participants **Yes/No**

If yes, will you obtain written consent? **Yes/No**

Full Information will be provided to Respondents who will be given it before the Web Survey is started, by way of an Information Sheet that they must read and acknowledge before proceeding. An Informed Consent form must be signed, in advance, by those participating in the In-Depth interviews.

d) Will payment or an incentive be offered to participants? **Yes/No**

If yes, please state amount of payment or type of incentive

e) Length of session for an individual participant (if more than one session, please give number and nature of sessions and amount of time for each): 10 mins to fill in survey and up to 2 hrs. For the In-Depth interviews.

f) In what locations, will data gathering take place? Volunteers will use Mobile phones, Tablet Computers and PC's to access the Internet for the survey, and via Skype Live Video conferencing for the interviews.

g) Will you inform your participants of their right to withdraw from the research? (They can stop at any point) **Yes/No**

h) Will you guarantee confidentiality of information to your participants? **Yes/No**
(No personal details will be taken on the Web Survey – Confidentiality will be guaranteed for those participating in the In-Depth Interviews)

i) Will you guarantee anonymity to your participants? **Yes/No**
(No personal details will be taken on the Web Survey – Anonymity will be guaranteed for those participating in the In-Depth Interviews)

6. Safety and legal issues

a) Will you be alone with a participant? **Yes/No**

b) Will you be alone with a group of participants? **Yes/No**

e) What safety issues does your methodology raise for you and for your participants?
Participants may feel uncomfortable with some of the topics raised, but they will be apprised of this before the Survey starts, otherwise none.

f) What legal issues does your methodology raise for you and for your participants?
It is possible a small minority of the In-Depth interviewees may admit to some criminal activity in their responses, such as child abuse or involvement with Indecent Images of Children. If this occurs, the police may have to be informed, overriding any guarantee of anonymity / confidentiality given to respondents.

7. Codes of ethics

a) Have you read and understood at least one of the following: **Yes**

The British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice? (available at www.britsoc.org.uk)

The Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology by the British Society of Criminology? (available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/bsc/council/CODEETH.HTM>)

The Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines (available at: <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethics.htm>)

Another set of ethics guidelines appropriate to your research topic (Please specify)

b) Are there any ethical issues which concern you about this piece of research? **Yes/No**
If yes, please specify:

I believe the information given above to be true. The methodology outlined above will be the methodology used in my research. I will notify my supervisor of any proposed changes to this methodology.

Signature of Investigator: Andrew Monaghan

Date: 7/III/2014

Signature of Supervisor(s):

Date:

Please note: The application must be approved by ALL supervisors and ALL supervisors must sign the application form. Students being supervised across subject areas MUST obtain the agreement of BOTH supervisors.

Counter-signed by (member of programme team):

Name

Signature

Date

Passed by Social Sciences Academic Group Ethics Subcommittee

Names of two representatives:

Signatures:

Date:

Middlesex University School Health and Social Sciences

Social Sciences Academic Group

Application for research ethics approval (Stage 3)

The purpose of this form is to help staff and students in the Social Sciences Academic Group in their pursuit of ethical research methodologies and procedures.

Please complete the form giving as much detail as possible. If a question is not applicable, please indicate by marking N/A. Students should discuss and complete the form with their supervisors.

For Taught Masters students, ethics applications are usually dealt with at programme level, though referral to the Social Sciences Academic Group Ethics Subcommittee is a possibility if complex or contentious ethics issues arise.

You must submit with this application:

- a) A summary of the methodology to be used in the research*
- b) Draft of any interview schedule or questionnaire you propose to use or outline of the topics to be covered*
- c) Any information sheets and/or consent forms for participants.*

3. Personal details

- a) Name of student: Andrew Monaghan*
- b) Address: Flat G, Grasby House, 5 Fitzjohn Av., Barnet, Herts, EN5 2HE*
- c) Phone Number: 0208440XXXX*
- d) Email address: andrew87@mdx.ac.uk*

2. Programme details:

- a) Name of program: PhD.*
- b) Year/s of study: 2013-16*
- c) Mode of study: Full-time/Part-time*
- d) Name(s) of supervisor(s): Prof. V. Ruggiero & Dr. E Martellozzo*

5. Details of proposed study:

a) Title of study: **Self-Generated Images in Online Pornography**

b) Please give a brief description of the nature of the study (50-100 words), including details of data collection procedures:

This will be an investigation into two aspects of Self-Generated Images in Online Pornography (SGliOP) in modern society. Firstly, a range of existing Theories (Sociological, Political and Cultural) will be applied to the topic of SGliOP both through a literature search, and via the Mixed Research Method approach of Primary Research. Other 'new' theories may well emerge from this process, via a Grounded Theory approach. Secondly, an Empirical investigation will be conducted into the following areas: extent of SGliOP's use, how it is used, new technologies and software applications which have allowed SGliOP to flourish and the harm or good that use and exposure may cause to users, producers and distributors.

A flow Chart has been appended to the end of this Form so that the reader can easily see the 3 Primary Research Stages which take place in this research.

Ethical Approval has already been attained for Stages 1 and 2 of this research and this Ethical Application Form therefore relates to the issues surrounding the conduct of the Stage 3 (Skype) Interviews for the Doctoral Research.

This will be Post-Transfer Panel research, which was successfully navigated in December 2014, under the Chairing of Dr. Miranda Horvath.

An initial, anonymous online survey (Stage 1) conducted via Survey Monkey, has already been carried out (between May 2014 & August 2014) to gain some quantum data and establish some correlations. Ethical Approval was attained for this Stage 1 process back in April 2014 with the appropriate form signed by Dr. Sarah Bradshaw, on behalf of the Middlesex University School of Law Ethics Sub-Committee, and Professor Vincenzo Ruggiero and Dr. Elena Martellozzo, the students' Doctoral Supervisors. Volunteers were asked for after the survey to take part in Qualitative In-Depth interviews (Stage 3 of the Primary Research). 35 actual volunteers came forward from this process and around 10 Interviews are envisaged, from a diverse spread of ages, genders, occupations, ethnic origins and sexualities. Although choice of participants may become constrained, as some of these volunteers drop out or decline to take part.

A Stage 2 Interview phase has taken place before these Stage 3 interviews commence. In this, 5 police officers working with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) will be interviewed about the possible links between online offenders and SGliOP. The data generated will help to inform the Interview Schedule of the Stage 3 Interviews in SGliOP's potential role in online criminal offending via the production, distribution and viewing of Indecent Images of Children, or online grooming activities. Contact with these Officers was made via the network of contacts previously established by Dr. Martellozzo in her own Doctoral Research and subsequent work.

This Ethical Application Form therefore relates to the issues surrounding the conduct of the Stage 3 Interviews for the Doctoral Research. The source of these contacts are volunteers from the Stage 1 online Survey.

This will be Post-Transfer Panel research, which was successfully navigated in December 2014, under the Chairing of Dr. Miranda Horvath.

c) Will primary data be collected?

Yes/No

If NO, please go to Section 7 of this form

4. Details of the participants in the study:

a) From what population, will your participants be drawn?

Stage 3: 10 volunteers from among the 35 who have given their Skype / or email details after the Stage 1 online survey. This represents 35 volunteers out of 525 respondents who fully completed the actual questionnaire. Over 300 partial forms had to be discarded as unusable.

b) Numbers:

Stage 3: 10 respondent volunteers from the Stage 1 online survey, for the stage 3 Interviews.

c) Are children aged 18 or under to be involved?

Yes/No

If yes, what ages will your participants be? N/A

Please note: If you are conducting research with children (under the age of 18) or vulnerable adults you must undergo a police check. This takes 6 or more weeks.

5. Access and consent:

g) Briefly describe how access will be gained to the participants.

Stage 3 of the Primary Research

From the Stage 1 online survey, 10 In-Depth interviews will take place with respondents who have volunteered their contact details at the end of the initial Survey. Before volunteers are asked to input their contact details, they were offered the opportunity to use a pseudonym, to boost their personal sense of their anonymity in the research. The great majority of the 35 volunteers for the Stage 3 Interviews have employed this option by using either an email address or Skype account name that does not contain any identifying means (apart from some with obvious first names only). However, as no actual physical meeting will take place between any of the interviewees and the researcher, all contact can take place with just a first name – whether real or a pseudonym. This will increase the confidence of all participants in their anonymity and confidentiality, at this stage of the research.

When contacting these participants, a new and neutral email account, containing the name 'mdxdoctoralresearch' will be used by the researcher. This will provide a necessary buffer between the researcher and the interviewees should anything unforeseen or unwelcome occur in terms of emails sent from the interviewees to the researcher. It is conceivable that this neutral email account might have to be disabled if things spiralled out of control with certain interviewees and their email correspondence.

The preceding precautions also apply to the use of Skype for correspondence with the interviewees. A new account, containing the neutral 'mdxdoctoralresearch' identifier, will be used, rather than the personal account of the researcher.

The use of separate email and Skype accounts are just part of the features to protect respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, but also serve to enhance the safety of all involved when conducting the study. Therefore, no personal Telephone Numbers or accommodation Address (of the Researcher) will be made available to any respondents.

Furthermore, all the potential recruits for the Stage 3 Interview process will be offered the possibility of a voice only interview, rather than one with both visual and sound elements. This should ensure interviewees who feel nervous or uncertain about their anonymity and confidentiality are furnished with even more reassurance, before any interviews commence.

b) Will informed consent be sought from any gatekeepers? Yes/No

N/A

If so, what gatekeepers?

Will you obtain written consent from the gatekeepers? Yes/No:

Via electronic means

c) Will informed consent be obtained directly from all participants Yes/No

If yes, will you obtain written consent? Yes / No

Due to the anonymous and confidential nature of the Skype interviews, it will be impossible to gain written Informed Consent before the interviews take place. Many of the interview will take place via a Skype only video online call. Therefore, respondents will be asked to give verbal consent to take part in the interview, before the interview commences and the interview will be recorded as proof that consent was given in this manner.

d) Will payment or an incentive be offered to participants? Yes/No

If yes, please state amount of payment or type of incentive

e) Length of session for an individual participant (if more than one session, please give number and nature of sessions and amount of time for each):

For the Stage 3 Interviewees: *Approximately 60 minutes per interview.*

f) In what locations, will data gathering take place?

Stage 3: *via Skype Live Video conferencing (or Voice only if requested) for the interviews.*

g) Will you inform your participants of their right to withdraw from the research? Yes/No
(They can stop the interview, and withdraw, at any point, without prejudice, and will be appraised of this fact beforehand). If they do so their partially collected data will be discarded, in entirety and not used in the research.

h) Will you guarantee confidentiality of information to your participants? Yes/No
Confidentiality will be guaranteed for those participating in both Stage 3 of the In-Depth Interviews. However, all participants will be advised in advance that if they disclose any criminal activities in which a child or adult is currently being subjected to harm, or about to be, then the police must be informed by the Researcher.

i) Will you guarantee anonymity to your participants? Yes/No -
Anonymity will be guaranteed for those participating in Stages 3 of the Skype in-Depth Interviews. Any names / or places of work etc. will be diligently replaced with substitutes to preserve their anonymous status. This is crucial to ensure that Respondents feel able to talk candidly about their feelings and experiences with SGLiOP.

6. Safety and legal issues

a) Will you be alone with a participant?
Yes/No: All the Stage 3 Interviews will be conducted remotely and online by Skype. There will be no physical meeting or contact between researcher and interviewee at all, under any circumstances.

b) Will you be alone with a group of participants? Yes/No:
Again, all the interviews will be conducted online, remotely, and on a 1-2-1 basis, there will be no group interviews or focus group type contacts.

h) What safety issues does your methodology raise for you and for your participants?

Stage 3: *The physical 'Safety' of both Participants and Researcher are significantly enhanced using Skype. This is augmented by the fact that the Interviewees will remain anonymous, their identities hidden from the researcher using nom de plumes and email / Skype accounts that confer no knowledge of real names, identities or even geographical locations. The same anonymity/confidentiality also appertains to the Researcher, who will be using the 'mdxphdresearch' tag in all emails during the Skype conferencing contacts. This two-way impenetrable barrier significantly enhances the mutual safety, security, and health of both researcher and interviewee.*

The emotional safety of both Interviewer and Participants is another issue to consider here, as it is certainly possible that the Semi-Structured interviews could lead to the disclosure of potential behaviour by Respondents which is taboo, distressing or possibly even criminal. Respondents will be advised of such dangers, and the possible emotional personal consequences in advance, and the Researcher will endeavour to maintain as professional and balanced / calm approach to the topics which arise. The previous interviews with Officers of the Metropolitan Police at the Paedophile Unit of SOCA during Stage 2 have fortified and prepared the Interviewer for a discussion of the gamut of upsetting and potentially criminal behaviour that might arise, particularly in relationship to the illegal abuse of children. See Pages 10-11 of this document for a wide-range of information and helpful organizations which will be suggested to participants who become distressed during the Stage 3 interview.

- i) What legal issues does your methodology raise for you and for your participants?

The real danger of legal issues arising in Stage 3 of the research, is when Respondents potentially disclose that they are currently indulging in Offending behaviour with either vulnerable adults or children, either online or physically in their proximal location. All Respondents will be robustly advised in advance that such disclosures will lead to the Researcher being forced to rescind the guarantee of anonymity / confidentiality, if genuine concerns, that illegal activities which harm children and vulnerable adults are revealed, during the interview. This obviously leads on to another question, how Valid will results be from Stage 3, on the issue of online Offending and SGLIOP? This is the reason for the Stage 2 Interviews with the Officers from the MPS, to counter any mendacity or evasion from Interviewees in Stage 3. Online offending however, it should be remembered, is only one aspect of this investigation into SGLIOP. The project is not solely about this issue, however important it is.

7. Codes of ethics

- a) Have you read and understood at least one of the following: **Yes**

The British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice? (Available at www.britsoc.org.uk)

The Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology by the British Society of Criminology? (Available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/bsc/council/CODEETH.HTM>)

The Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines (available at: <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethics.htm>)

Another set of ethics guidelines appropriate to your research topic (Please specify)

The Researcher is also using the ESRC Ethical Principals, available at:

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/framework-for-research-ethics-09-12_tcm8-4586.pdf (2012)

- b) Are there any ethical issues which concern you about this piece of research? **Yes**

If yes, please specify:

- 1) The situation potentially arising that a Respondent during Stage 3 would have to be reported to the Police after disclosing online Offending. The issues were fully discussed earlier. Although the names and addresses of Interviewees are going to be unknown to the Researcher, their email / Skype details could be passed on.

- 2) *The possible emotional impact / distress that both Respondents and Researcher could face when discussing certain issues, particularly those relating to criminal behaviour. Again, the topic was discussed fully earlier.*
-

I believe the information given above to be true. The methodology outlined above will be the methodology used in my research. I will notify my supervisor of any proposed changes to this methodology.

Signature of Investigator: *Andrew Monaghan*

Date: 30/XI/2015

Signature of Supervisor(s):

Date:

Please note: *The application must be approved by ALL supervisors and ALL supervisors must sign the application form. Students being supervised across subject areas MUST obtain the agreement of BOTH supervisors.*

Counter-signed by (member of programme team):

Name

Signature

Date

Passed by Social Sciences Academic Group Ethics Subcommittee

Names of two representatives:

Signatures:

Date:

Why Video / Skype Interviews are superior to Voice Only Interviews in the Stage 3 Research Process:

Greater veracity in the Screening Process

Although respondents will be offered the choice of a voice only interview, to enhance the feeling of security, anonymity and confidentiality of the participant, alongside the fact that this may be the only mechanism by which some will agree to participate at all, it is envisaged that most the 10 Stage 3 interviews will take place using the video link facility.

The video link interview will enjoy the benefits of checking the accuracy of the respondents stated responses to several screening questions, such as Gender, Ethnicity and Age. Verifying these characteristics will be a vitally important element in ensuring that the subsequent data generated during the interview is valid from a research perspective, thus promoting the academic robustness of any findings drawn from subsequent analysis of what the interviewee said.

Enhanced capacity to capture Verbal and Non-Verbal cues

The research of 1970's body language theorist Professor Mehrabian, provides another compelling reason to justify the pre-eminence of the video interview rather than a mere voice only one. This is because 'what you say' when interviewed, contains only a fraction of the true depth of meaning about 'what you meant' while responding. The rest of this rich data can only be garnered from a scrutiny of the facial expressions of the interviewee, and their body language. Voice only interviews risk the loss of much of this data, severely undermining the validity of any data and analysis produced.

The ability to detect avoidance, evasion, exaggeration and mendacity are all vital areas for a skilled interlocutor to be able to pick up on, and possibly react to, as necessary. Without the live image of the human physiognomy, in all its expressive fecundity, to see, the researcher would be severely retarded in their goal to achieve genuine insights, if restricted to voice only responses. The nuances of genuine meanings could very be lost if relying only on the actual words spoken, and the tone in which they were said, in response to questions. The ability to read emotional body language responses to questions posed is an important reason why most the Stage 3 interviews will be conducted via a video link.

One vital area why this research requires a video link for this stage of the fieldwork is that levels of 'discomfort', when asked certain sensitive questions, might only be detectable by the interviewer seeing the non-verbal cues given off by the respondent. Many might be able to mask such a response by maintaining control over their voices. Without the video link, the point when a respondent is feeling discomfort, might not be as readily detectable, and this is a fundamental imperative when fulfilling the ethical principal of 'do no harm', as the foundation upon which the acme of quality research is based.

The Form mirrors the Process

A further reason for the desirability of using video over voice only interviews is that the research goals of the investigation are an enquiry into the negative and positive impacts that SGIOP makes on individuals and society. The Skype process, used to conduct these Stage 3 interviews, will be highly familiar to interviewees, many of whom will have great familiarity and personal ease in using the software and technology, both in their everyday lives, and in their own use of SGIOP. Such a confluence is both serendipitous and beneficial, to both the individual and the fieldwork undertaken by the researcher.

Keeping Focus

One final justification for the use of video rather than voice only interviews is the ability to keep the semi-structured process on track. The interactive dynamic between interviewer and interviewee will allow for the interlocutor to keep guiding the respondent back to questions at hand, rather than rambling completely off point, and therefore potentially wasting precious contact time between the two. Reading the expressions and non-verbal cues will be an important tool in ensuring the interview progresses satisfactorily to a fruitful conclusion. The cold detachment of voice only interaction would make such actions by the researcher seem possibly brusque, and hectoring, as opposed to the warmth and humanity of face-to-face, by video, encounters.

Help to be provided to Interviewees, if requested or needed:

Interviewees will be referred to several professional organisations if they request help, or the researcher feels they may need support and assistance. Obviously, the individual nature of each situation will dictate where specifically the respondents should be advised to seek further help.

If the respondent discloses a criminal act being perpetrated on themselves, or another person they know, then they will be advised to inform the police. This may also be a 'historic abuse' case, which have gained much more media attention since the advent of Operation Yew Tree following the recent Jimmy Saville scandal. Respondents will be invited to ring their local non-emergency police phone number or visit the MPS website to gain more information, or report a crime (<http://content.met.police.uk/Home>).

If the criminal disclosure involves harm to children the Respondent will be invited to contact the NSPCC, either on the website; <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/> or telephone line: 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Respondents will also be advised to call Childline on 08001111 although this number is more for children calling for help, to report abuse.

Victims of rape will be referred to Rape Crisis, via their website: <http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/> or telephone helpline: 0808, 802999.

If respondents need help with their relationships, they will be referred to Relate, on their website: <http://www.relate.org.uk/> or Tel: 0300, 1001234.

A respondent who asks for help over Domestic Violence will be referred for help to the National Domestic Violence website:

<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/> or their phone helpline: 0808, 2000247.

Any respondent who asks for help about a crime that they have suffered, whether reported or not, will be referred to Victim Support on their Website <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/> or telephone helpline: 08081689111.

If the respondent is becoming emotionally or mentally distressed over an issue raised in the interview, the contact details of several organisations, and their services, will be given for the participant to refer to. These include:

Their local GP

The NHS '111' non-emergency telephone helpline.

999 if the respondent is in imminent danger of suffering harm.

The location of the nearest NHS A&E Department.

The multiple ways of contacting The Samaritans, for help: Tel 08457 90 90 90, email: jo@samaritans.org, Website: <http://www.samaritans.org/>, or the location of their nearest Branch.

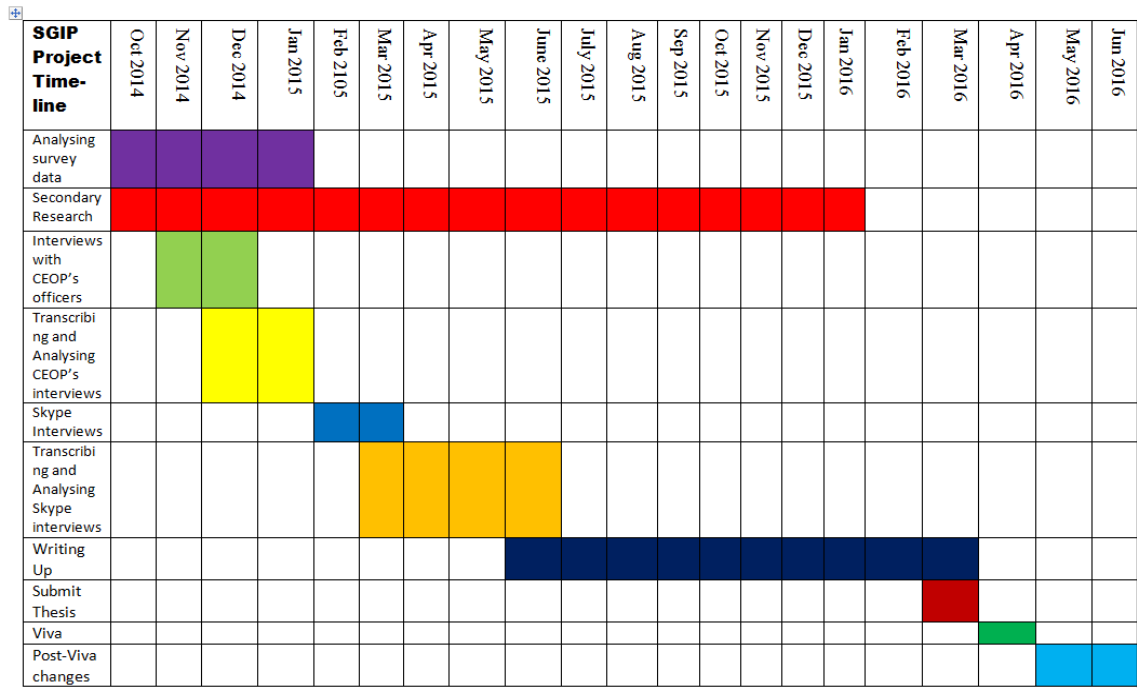
The mental health charity Mind can be contacted by the Respondent if they are experiencing mental health problems over the content of the interview. Their website is <http://www.mind.org.uk/> and their telephone help line is: 0300, 123339.

Furthermore, NHS Choices have a whole range of helplines on their Moodzone website: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/mental-health-helplines.aspx>

Appendix 2

Planning the PhD project Gantt Chart

This Gantt Chart was used during the Transfer Panel PP presentation, so does not include the first part of the inquiry, which commenced in January 2016.



Appendix 3

Stage 1 online survey

This is the survey, including the landing page Participant Information Sheet (PIS), and Question 1, which asked for respondents Informed Consent before they could start the survey proper, on Question 2.

What is this Research for?

This is Primary Research towards a PhD Thesis at Middlesex University, London, projected to be completed in 2016. The purpose is to ascertain the extent of usage, and nature of, Amateur & Self-Generated Internet Pornography in modern society. This means an investigation into any material with sexual or erotic content created and uploaded by online users. Henceforth this shall be referred to as User or Self-Generated Internet Porn.

Furthermore, the impact of such User-Generated Internet Porn on producers, distributors and viewers is being studied.

This is an investigation into Amateur and User-Generated Internet Pornography that has been made by ordinary Internet users, and not by commercial enterprises for profit. Such material might entail: producing pornographic or erotic videos or DVD clips for upload, sending 'Selfies' containing erotic or pornographic content, using Social Networking Sites and Apps for sexual purposes (like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Grindr or Tinder etc.), or using Skype & Web Cams for pornographic or erotic purposes.

It will also examine the attitudes and views of all Internet users towards the subject of Self-Generated Internet Pornography – so please do participate in the study, even if you have never used or seen such material!

How will your views and facts be elicited?

It will be done through the use of a totally anonymous and confidential web-survey questionnaire. No identifying personal information of any kind will be recorded – including any record of the Internet Protocol (IP) Address of the device from which you complete the survey. Your name, email address and contact details are not asked for. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and probably much less, depending on your answers. All the questions are 'Multiple Choice' and involve virtually no writing on your part, although optional 'comment boxes' have been included with some questions, should you wish to volunteer further information. As the subject of this investigation is User-Generated Internet Pornography, this means that some questions are of a sensitive, personal and intimate nature. Please consider this before commencing the survey.

Ethical Approval by Middlesex University

The Ethics Committee of the School of Law, of Middlesex University, London, has approved the use and nature of this Research for a Doctoral Thesis.

Minimum Age Limit

All participants must be over the age of 18.

Withdrawal

You may withdraw from the survey at any point by simply clicking on the Exit button.

Informed Consent

By answering 'Yes' to the question below, you are consenting to participate in the Research.

Results

All the information produced will be merged into large numerical metadata. If you wish to get further information about the preliminary, and later final, results of this research, please copy and paste the following link into your Web-Browser, and visit the Facebook page. If you click 'Like' you will receive updates, news and results from the Survey, via Facebook.

www.facebook.com/mdxpornresearch

Phase Two of the Research.

The survey you are about to undertake represents phase one of the Primary Research for this study. If you wish to volunteer for phase two (anonymous Skype Interviews), an opportunity will be made available at the conclusion, for you to insert your contact details. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, use only your first name, which does not have to be your real name, and either your email address or Skype details. The researcher may contact you in due course, when this survey (Phase one of the research) has concluded, at the end of July 2014.

1. Do you consent to participate in this research?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

2. Your Age

- ☐ 19 or under
- ☐ 20-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-69
- ☐ 70-79
- ☐ 80 and over

3. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. Sexuality

- ☐ Heterosexual (Straight)
- ☐ Homosexual (Gay or Lesbian)
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Ethnicity

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Hispanic (e.g. Spanish, Portuguese, Latin America, South America etc.)
- ☐ Asian (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi etc.)

- ☐ South East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese etc.)
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Other (please specify)

6. Occupation (Please indicate your main one)

- ☐ Housewife / House-Husband
- ☐ Managerial / Professional
- ☐ Manual Worker ('Blue Collar')
- ☐ Office Worker / Admin. ('White Collar')
- ☐ On Benefit/s
- ☐ Retail / Shop Worker
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Sex Worker / Porn Worker
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other (Please Specify)

7. Relationship Status

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Cohabiting (Living Together)
- ☐ In a relationship, but not living together
- ☐ Divorced / Separated
- ☐ Widow/er
- ☐ Civil Partnership (in the UK)
- ☐ Open Relationship
- ☐ Other (please specify)

8. Which geographical location are you completing this Survey from?

- ☐ UK

- ☐ Non-UK Europe
- ☐ North America
- ☐ South America
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Australia / NZ region
- ☐ Other (please specify Country)

9. Do you identify with any of the following religions? (Please select one)

- ☐ Buddhism
- ☐ Christianity
- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Judaism
- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Sikhism
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Making your own Amateur and User-Generated Internet Porn is an exploitative and degrading experience for which of these groups, who do it? (You can select more than one option)

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Teenagers
- ☐ Adults

Comments (please specify)

11. People making, distributing and using Amateur produced Internet Pornography, is a big problem in modern society.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments (please specify)

12. Is it illegal to take pictures, and send or possess images of people with a sexual content, when the person featured is at the following ages?

Yes

No

15 and under	<input type="radio"/> 15 and under Yes	<input type="radio"/> 15 and under No	<input type="radio"/>
16-17	<input type="radio"/> 16-17 Yes	<input type="radio"/> 16-17 No	<input type="radio"/>
18+	<input type="radio"/> 18+ Yes	<input type="radio"/> 18+ No	<input type="radio"/>

Comments (please specify)



13. The ability to make, distribute and use your own Internet Pornography should be much more severely restricted by the Government.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments (please specify)



14. Amateur and User-Generated Internet Porn is a danger to the health, safety and security of young people.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments (please specify)



15. Rank the following 7 reasons, from 1-7 with 1 being the highest, that might explain the recent growth in Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn:

Cheaper and better quality Video / DVD recording equipment

Increased Broadband / Wi-Fi Upload and Download Speeds

Laptops and PC's

Online Porn is becoming more socially acceptable

Smart Phones

Social Networking Sites & Apps

Tablet Computers

16. Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn can often lead users into making, distributing, storing and viewing, Abusive Images of Children.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments (please specify)

17. Amateur and User-Generated Internet Porn has been useful for minority groups, such as those with speciality (e.g. BDSM etc.) and Fetish (e.g. Feet, Chubbys etc.) sexual interests.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments (please specify)

18. Can you ever foresee a future scenario where you might make and distribute your own Amateur or User-Generated sexual or erotic material?

- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Don't Know

Comments (please specify)



19. Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn could be a useful mechanism for young people to find out about sex.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Comments (please specify)



20. With what frequency do you purposefully search for Internet Porn?

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Most days in a week
- ☐ At least once a week
- ☐ At least once a month
- ☐ At least once every 2-3 months
- ☐ At least once every 4-6 months
- ☐ At least once every 7-12 months
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Never

Comments (please specify)



21. Have you ever received unasked for Pornographic material (Spam), in your email 'Inbox', Social Networking Site newsfeed, or App etc.?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

☐ Don't Know

Comments (please specify)

22. About the last question: Was any of the unasked for 'Spam' Porn you received, of an Amateur or home-made origin, rather than from a commercial producer?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

Comments (please specify)

23. Have you viewed, used or created any type of Internet Pornography in the last 6 Months?

☐ Yes

☐ No

24. In the last 6 Months, what proportion of the Internet Pornography you have seen and used, was created by Amateurs or Self-Published, and not made by commercial organisations?

☐ High amount (the majority was Self-Generated by online users)

☐ Medium amount (a balanced amount was Self-Generated by online users)

☐ Low amount (only a minority was Self-Generated)

☐ None (you saw zero Self-Published or Amateur pornographic content in this period)

Comments (please specify)

25. What types of Self-Generated Internet Pornographic material have you encountered, or used, in the last 6 months? (You can select more than one option)

☐ Sexual or erotic 'Selfie's'

☐ Sexual or erotic pictures taken by online users

- ☐ Web-Cam sex
- ☐ Live video calls and chats (via Skype etc.)
- ☐ Sexting (sending messages & images with erotic or sexual content)
- ☐ DVD or Video uploaded onto Social Networking Sites or Apps
- ☐ DVD or Video uploaded onto 'Tube' sites (like: YouTube, Porn tube, X tube etc.)
- ☐ Sex-Blogs
- ☐ Amateur Pornographic or erotic fiction
- ☐ Pornographic or erotic magazines
- ☐ Fetish material: (e.g. BDSM, Feet, Chubby-Chasers etc.)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

26. Have you seen or used any Amateur or Self-Generated Internet Porn on any of the following Sites or Applications?

	Yes	No	Don't use these Sites or Apps
Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook / Twitter etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook / Twitter etc.) Yes	<input type="radio"/> Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook / Twitter etc.) No	<input type="radio"/> Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook / Twitter etc.) Don't use these Sites or Apps
Internet Dating Sites (e.g. Zoosk, eHarmony, match.com etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Internet Dating Sites (e.g. Zoosk, eHarmony, match.com etc.) Yes	<input type="radio"/> Internet Dating Sites (e.g. Zoosk, eHarmony, match.com etc.) No	<input type="radio"/> Internet Dating Sites (e.g. Zoosk, eHarmony, match.com etc.) Don't use these Sites or Apps
Tube sites (e.g. Porntube, Xtube, YouTube etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Tube sites (e.g. Porntube, Xtube, YouTube etc.) Yes	<input type="radio"/> Tube sites (e.g. Porntube, Xtube, YouTube etc.) No	<input type="radio"/> Tube sites (e.g. Porntube, Xtube, YouTube etc.) Don't use these Sites or Apps
WhatsApp	<input type="radio"/> WhatsApp Yes	<input type="radio"/> WhatsApp No	<input type="radio"/> WhatsApp Don't use these Sites or Apps
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/> Snapchat Yes	<input type="radio"/> Snapchat No	<input type="radio"/> Snapchat Don't use these Sites or Apps
Instagram	<input type="radio"/> Instagram Yes	<input type="radio"/> Instagram No	<input type="radio"/> Instagram Don't use these Sites or Apps
Flickr	<input type="radio"/> Flickr Yes	<input type="radio"/> Flickr No	<input type="radio"/> Flickr Don't use these Sites or Apps
Vine	<input type="radio"/> Vine Yes	<input type="radio"/> Vine No	<input type="radio"/> Vine Don't use these Sites or Apps
Web cam link ups (e.g. Skype or Chatroulette etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Web cam link ups (e.g. Skype or Chatroulette etc.) Yes	<input type="radio"/> Web cam link ups (e.g. Skype or Chatroulette etc.) No	<input type="radio"/> Web cam link ups (e.g. Skype or Chatroulette etc.) Don't use these Sites or Apps

	Yes	No	Don't use these Sites or Apps
Hook-up sites (e.g. Tinder and Grindr etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Hook-up sites (e.g. Tinder and Grindr etc.) Yes	<input type="radio"/> Hook-up sites (e.g. Tinder and Grindr etc.) No	<input type="radio"/> Hook-up sites (e.g. Tinder and Grindr etc.) Don't use these Sites or Apps
Fetish Websites (e.g. BDSM etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Fetish Websites (e.g. BDSM etc.) Yes	<input type="radio"/> Fetish Websites (e.g. BDSM etc.) No	<input type="radio"/> Fetish Websites (e.g. BDSM etc.) Don't use these Sites or Apps
Erotic or Pornographic Blogs or Fiction	<input type="radio"/> Erotic or Pornographic Blogs or Fiction Yes	<input type="radio"/> Erotic or Pornographic Blogs or Fiction No	<input type="radio"/> Erotic or Pornographic Blogs or Fiction Don't use these Sites or Apps

Other (please specify)

27. Have you ever made, uploaded or distributed any sexual or erotic material on the Internet?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments (please specify)

28. About the last question: how frequently have you made and uploaded your own erotic or sexual content on the Internet?

☐ Frequently

☐ Moderately

☐ Infrequently

Comments (please specify)

29. Rate your overall experience with these types of Internet Porn, on a Scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best and 1 the worst.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Commercial Internet Porn	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 1	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 2	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 3	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 4	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 5	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 6	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 7	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 8	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 9	<input type="radio"/> Commercial Internet Porn 10
Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 1	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 2	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 3	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 4	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 5	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 6	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 7	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 8	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 9	<input type="radio"/> Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn 10

Comments (please specify)

30. Are you prepared to pay for Internet Porn, now that there is a lot of Amateur, Self-Produced and Free Porn available on the Internet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ Don't know

Comments (please specify)

31. How do you use your Amateur & User-Generated Internet Pornography?

Yes

No

Sexual stimulation

☐ Sexual stimulation Yes

☐ Sexual stimulation No

Masturbation

☐ Masturbation Yes

☐ Masturbation No

With your sexual partner/s

☐ With your sexual partner/s Yes

☐ With your sexual partner/s No

For collecting purposes

☐ For collecting purposes Yes

☐ For collecting purposes No

For Research reasons

☐ For Research Reasons Yes

☐ For Research reasons, No

To satisfy curiosity

☐ To satisfy curiosity Yes

☐ To satisfy curiosity No

For educational reasons

☐ For educational reasons Yes

☐ For educational reasons, No

As a social pastime with friends

☐ As a social pastime with friends Yes

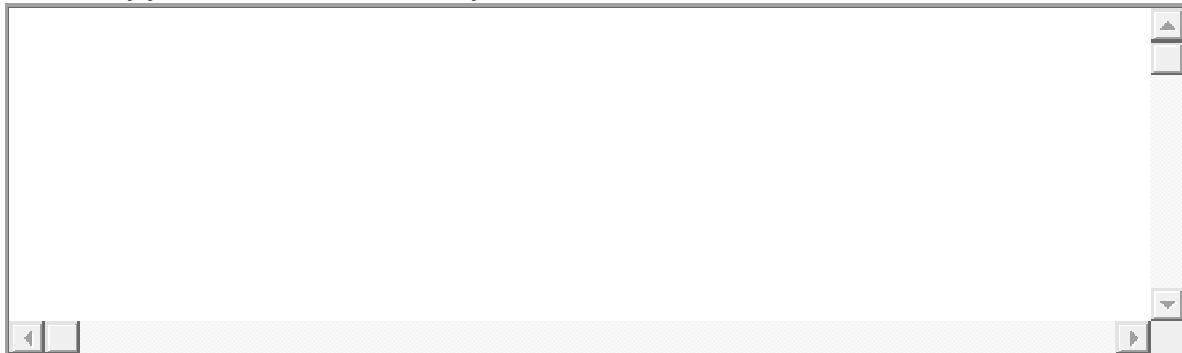
☐ As a social pastime with friends No

	Yes	No
For humorous reasons	<input type="radio"/> For humorous reasons Yes	<input type="radio"/> For humorous reasons No
To make friends and / or meet people with similar interests	<input type="radio"/> To make friends and / or meet people with similar interests Yes	<input type="radio"/> To make friends and / or meet people with similar interests No
Dating	<input type="radio"/> Dating Yes	<input type="radio"/> Dating No
Hooking-up for sex	<input type="radio"/> Hooking-up for sex Yes	<input type="radio"/> Hooking-up for sex No
Other (please specify)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 5px; right: 5px;">▲</div> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 5px; right: 5px;">▼</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 5px; bottom: 5px;">◀</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 5px; bottom: 5px;">▶</div> </div>	

32. Overall, do you think your experience with Amateur and User-Generated Internet Porn has been a positive or negative experience for you?

- ☐ Positive experience
- ☐ Neither positive or negative
- ☐ Negative experience
- ☐ Don't know

Tell us why you have answered this way



33. How old were you when you first used, or saw, Amateur or User-Generated Internet Porn?

Comments



34. How many times a week do you view, use or create, Amateur or User-Generated Internet Porn?

35. If you wish to volunteer to participate in phase two of this research, anonymous and confidential Interviews via Skype, on the subject of Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Porn, please insert a first name only (This can be an alias) and an email address or Skype contact details below.

Appendix 4

Stage 2 informed consent/Participant Information Sheet (PIS) & interview schedule



Information for participants

What is this Research for?

This is Primary Research towards a PhD Thesis at Middlesex University, London, projected to be completed in December 2016. The purpose is to ascertain the extent of usage, and nature of, Amateur & Self-Generated Internet Pornography in modern society. Furthermore, the potential harmful or positive consequences of this usage will also be inquired into. This means an investigation into any material with sexual or erotic content created and uploaded by online users. Henceforth this shall be referred to as Self-Generated Internet Porn (SGIP).

Furthermore, the impact of such Self-Generated Internet Porn on producers, distributors and viewers is being studied.

This is an investigation into Amateur and Self-Generated Internet Pornography that has been made by ordinary Internet users, and not by commercial enterprises for profit. Such material might entail: producing pornographic or erotic videos or DVD clips for upload, sending 'Selfies' containing erotic or pornographic content, using Social Networking Sites and Apps for sexual purposes (like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Grindr or Tinder etc.), 'Sexting' and using Skype & Web Cams for pornographic or erotic purposes.

It will also examine the attitudes and views of Internet users towards the subject of Self-Generated Internet Pornography.

You are participating in the Stage 2 Interviews:

This comprises 5 Semi-Structured Interviews with serving Police Officers working in investigating, arresting and prosecuting offenders using the Internet to commit sexual crimes, mostly against children, but possibly against adults too. The aim is to elicit the views and attitudes of such officers, based on their vocational experiences in the field, into the potential harmful impacts that SGIP can have.

Stage 1 of the research involved a large online anonymous / confidential survey, in which over 800 participants took part. It concluded in August 2014.

Stage 3, will involve 10 Skype interviews with volunteers from the Stage 1 survey, all of whom are users of SGIP.

Your interview will help to inform the questions put to the Stage 3 participants, particularly about the potential 'dark side' of SGIP.

Ethical Approval by Middlesex University

The Ethics Sub-Committee of the Department of Sociology/Criminology in the School of Law, of Middlesex University, London, has approved the use and nature of this Research for a Doctoral Thesis.

Withdrawal

You may withdraw from the interview at any point, without prejudice, just by informing the Researcher.

More Information:

If you want further information about this Research, please feel free to contact

- Dr Elena Martellozzo (Doctoral Supervisor), Department of Criminology and Sociology, Middlesex University, London, NW4 4BT. Tel: 020 8411 5269, Email: e.martellozzo@mdx.ac.uk
- Andrew Monaghan, PhD Researcher, andrew87@mdx.ac.uk

Informed Consent

If you sign and date below you are agreeing to the following:

- I have read and understand the information about the survey on SGIP and confirm that I have agreed to take part;
- I have been given contact details for the researchers;

- I understand that taking part is entirely voluntary, that no-one will be able to identify me from the information I have given, and I can stop taking part at any point;
- I understand that the answers I give will be anonymized (this means that the answers and any personal information I give will not be traced back to me);
- I understand that the anonymous information I provide, in addition to forming part of a Doctoral Thesis, may be used in the media (newspapers, TV or radio), in publications (like reports, newsletters, academic journals or leaflets) and on the internet (e.g. university websites, YouTube and other social media sites).

Print Name.....

Sign Name.....

Date.....

Results

If you would like to keep in touch with the results of this study, please enter you email below and you will be informed when it is published, and e-copies of the results / Thesis made available to you:

Email address.....

The Stage 2 interview schedule:

- 1) How long have you worked in investigating and prosecuting online offending behaviour, involving Indecent Images of Children or grooming activities etc.?
- 2) In your time of employment on this task, has SGIP been growing as a platform for offending? If so, why is this?
- 3) How easy or difficult is to distinguish SGIP from 'professional' pornography?
- 4) From your professional experience, how large a part of offending behaviour online is SGIP?
- 5) Which are the most popular hardware devices and software applications for SGIP which could lead to online offending and negative impacts on both children and adults?
- 6) How effective is the UK in dealing with the dangers of SGIP for online offending and harm, and how would you improve the situation?

- 7) In your experience, is SGIP a dangerous gateway or not, that can lead people who otherwise would not offend, into committing illegal and harmful acts online?
- 8) Remembering that you work with only the criminal and harmful impacts of SGIP, can you give a fair overall assessment of this phenomenon, including any positive or negative consequences for children, adults and society?

Appendix 5

Stage 3 informed consent/Participant Information Sheet (PIS) & interview schedule



Information for participants

What is this Research for?

This is Primary Research towards a PhD Thesis at Middlesex University, London, projected to be completed in December 2016. The purpose is to ascertain the extent of usage, and nature of, amateur & Self-Generated Images in Online Pornography in modern society. Furthermore, the potential harmful or positive consequences of this usage will also be inquired into. This means an investigation into any material with sexual or erotic content created and uploaded by online users. Henceforth this shall be referred to as Self-Generated Images in Online Porn (SGliOP).

Furthermore, the impact of such Self-Generated Images in Online Porn on producers, distributors and viewers is being studied.

This is an investigation into amateur and SGliOP that has been made by ordinary Internet users, and not by commercial enterprises for profit. Such material might entail: producing pornographic or erotic videos or DVD clips for upload, sending 'Selfies' containing erotic or pornographic content, using Social Networking Sites and Apps for sexual purposes (like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Grindr or Tinder etc.), 'sexting' and using Skype & Web Cams for pornographic or erotic purposes.

It will also examine the attitudes and views of online users towards the subject of SGliOP.

You are participating in the Stage 3 Interviews:

This comprises 10 Semi-Structured Interviews, conducted over Skype, with a range of volunteers from the Stage 1 online survey that you have already completed, and which you included your contact details on in Q36, indicating a willingness to participate further. The aim is to elicit the views and experiences of SGliOP users into the impacts that such material can have, both on the individual and society.

Stage 1 of the research involved a large online anonymous/confidential survey, in which over 800 participants took part (including yourself). It concluded in August 2014.

Stage 2, involved 5 interviews with online child protection officers working for the Metropolitan police, to investigate the harmful and criminal dangers of SGI's to both children and adults. These occurred in the summer of 2015.

Ethical Approval by Middlesex University

The Ethics Sub-Committee of the Department of Sociology/Criminology in the School of Law, of Middlesex University, London, has approved the use and nature of this Research for a Doctoral Thesis.

Withdrawal

You may withdraw from the interview at any point, without prejudice, just by informing the Researcher.

More Information:

If you want further information about this Research, please feel free to contact

- Dr Elena Martellozzo (Doctoral Supervisor), Department of Criminology and Sociology, Middlesex University, London, NW4 4BT. Tel: 020 8411 5269, Email: e.martellozzo@mdx.ac.uk

Informed Consent

If you sign and date below you are agreeing to the following:

- I have read and understand the information about the survey on SGLiOP and confirm that I have agreed to take part;
- I have been given contact details for the researchers;
- I understand that taking part is entirely voluntary, that no-one will be able to identify me from the information I have given, and I can stop taking part at any point;
- I understand that the answers I give will be both confidential and anonymized (this means that the answers and any personal information I give will not be traced back to me);
- I understand that the anonymous information I provide, in addition to forming part of a Doctoral Thesis, may be used in the media (newspapers, TV or radio), in publications (like reports, newsletters, academic journals or leaflets) and on the internet (e.g. university websites, YouTube and other social media sites).

- If I disclose any current criminal activity surrounding SGI's in Online Porn, which is harming any person, then the researcher may have to waive your right to confidentiality and report this to the relevant authorities.

Print User Name.....

Sign User Name.....

Date.....

Email address.....

You don't have to fill any of this area in yellow out, just give verbal consent at the start of your interview, saying you have read this form and agree to participate.

The Stage 3 interview schedule: (Themes & Sub Q's in Bold)

- 1) **(Information to participants)** Explain what the research is about, and ask the respondent if they have any questions about it, before commencing.
- 2) **(Respondents personal experiences with SGI use)** What have your experiences been with Self-Generated Images in Online Porn? Have you created any images and distributed them online?

Sub-Questions and Prompts:

- a. From your experiences with online SGI usage, how dangerous to young people do you feel it is? (Can you relate some examples of areas of concern you have?)
 - b. Did you personally find online SGI use educational and informative, at times? Could it be so for adolescents 13-19?
 - c. Can you explain more about your possible negative experiences with the use of online SGI's, things that have distressed, worried or shocked you (i.e. Revenge Porn, it's use by under 18's, blackmail, cyber-stalking, or Extreme Porn etc.?)
 - d. Do you regret any activities you may have taken in your previous use of online SGI's? If so, would you explain what and why? (Negatives)
 - e. In what ways, if any, has your use of online SGI's either improved your life (positive experiences), or made it worse (negatives)?
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- 3) **(Specifics of SGI use by the respondent)** Can you tell me about how you predominantly use SGI's? i.e.: Online Hook-ups for sex, dating, sending & receiving images to your sexual partners (sexting), masturbation, humour, and taking erotic/sexual 'Selfies' etc.?

Sub-Questions and Prompts:

Do you ever use SGliOP for any 'fetish porn' purposes and can you explain these uses, and your opinions of this type of usage?

- 4) **(CENSORSHIP & SGI's)** Should the government censor and restrict online porn, and SGI's, for adults, and would it be effective for adults? For under 18's? If so, how?
- 5) **(SGI versus commercial ONLINE PORN - CONTROL, CONSENT AND SAFETY)** How has the recent rise of SGliOP affected your interaction with commercially produced adult porn?

Sub-Questions and Prompts:

Do you think SGIiOP is superior to it as it may be more realistic and less exploitative etc.? (is it better or not? Safer or not? Are we losing control over who is producing what? And How?)

- 6) **(Open Forum for Respondents to contribute their own insights)** Are there any final comments that you would like to share with me, about SGI's, that could benefit this research?